

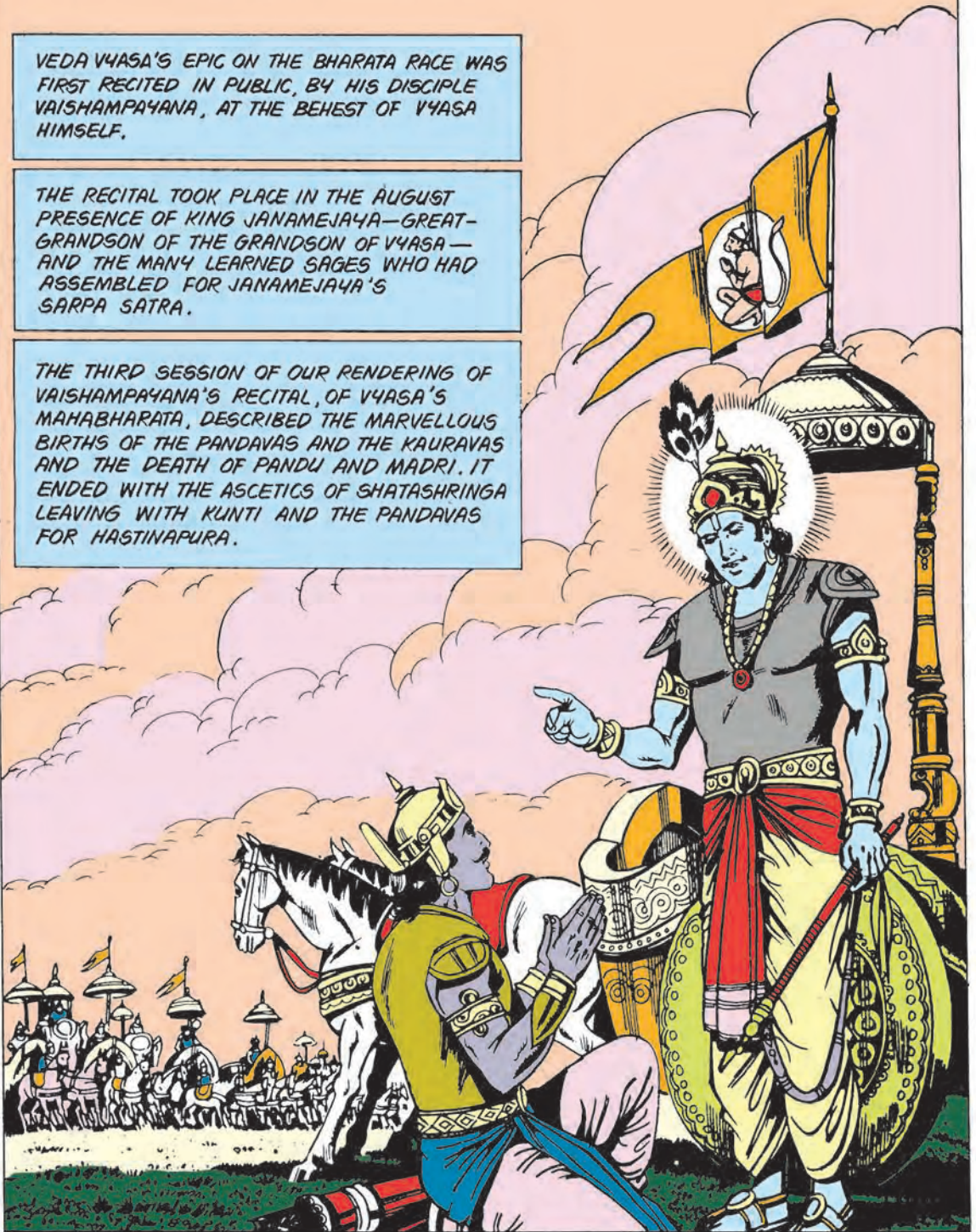
MAHABHARATA-4

The Pandavas at Hastinapura

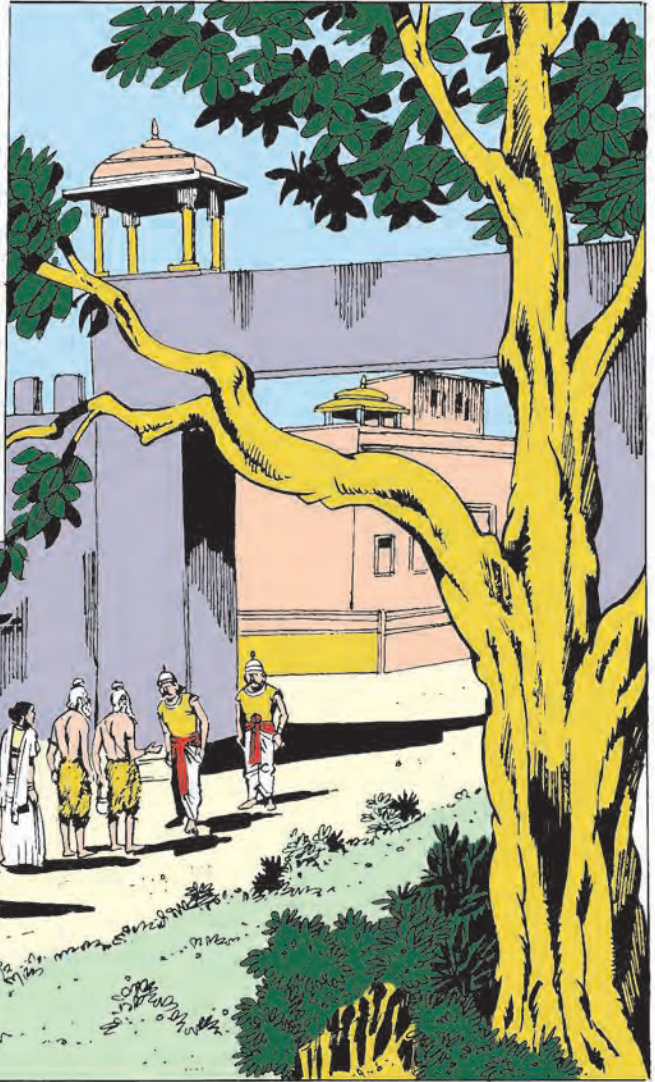
VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC, BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA, AT THE BEHEST OF VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA—GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA—AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA.

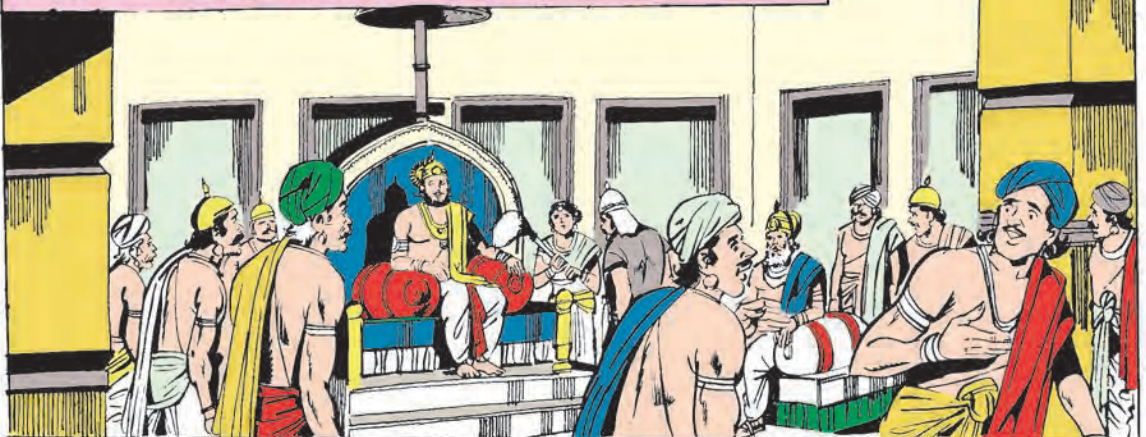
THE THIRD SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL, OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA, DESCRIBED THE MARVELLOUS BIRTHS OF THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAURAVAS AND THE DEATH OF PANDU AND MADRI. IT ENDED WITH THE ASCETICS OF SHATASHRINGA LEAVING WITH KUNTI AND THE PANDAVAS FOR HASTINAPURA.



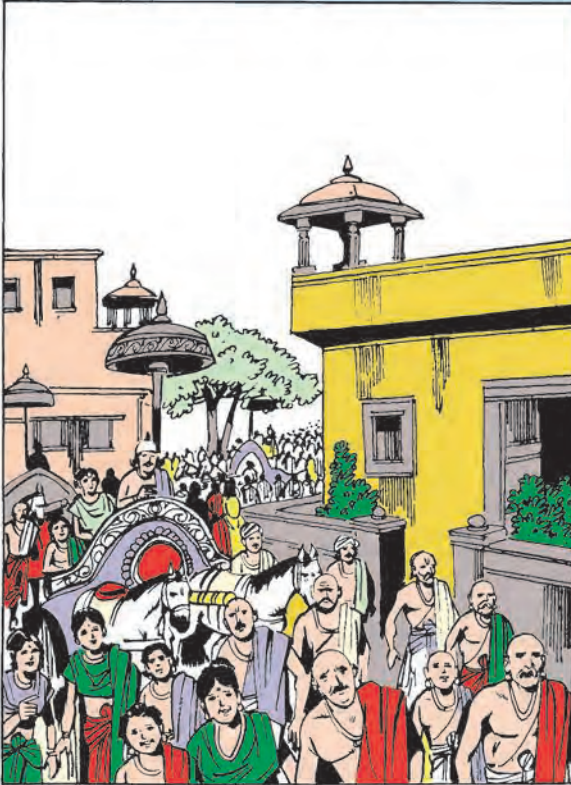
WHEN KUNTI AND THE ENTOURAGE ARRIVED AT THE PORTALS OF THE CITY OF HASTINAPURA, THE RISHIS ASKED THE GUARDS TO INFORM THE KING OF THEIR ARRIVAL.



"THE GUARDS LOST NO TIME IN CONVEYING THE MESSAGE. THE CITIZENS OF HASTINAPURA WERE SURPRISED TO HEAR OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE LARGE GROUP OF RISHIS AND BARDS."



"MEN AND WOMEN OF ALL CASTES THROGGED THE STREETS; SOME ON FOOT, SOME IN VEHICLES, ALL EAGER TO SEE THE VISITORS."



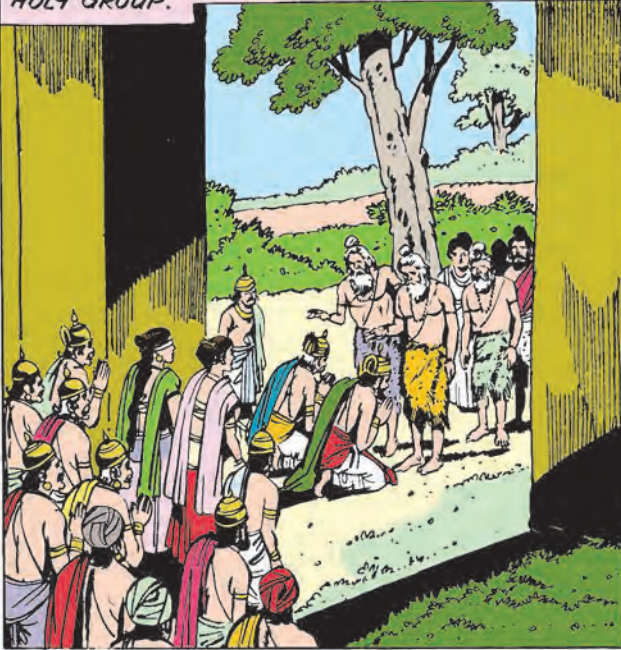
"THE CONCOURSE, THOUGH VAST, WAS PEACEFUL BECAUSE IT WAS ORDERLY AND FREE FROM SCUFFLE."



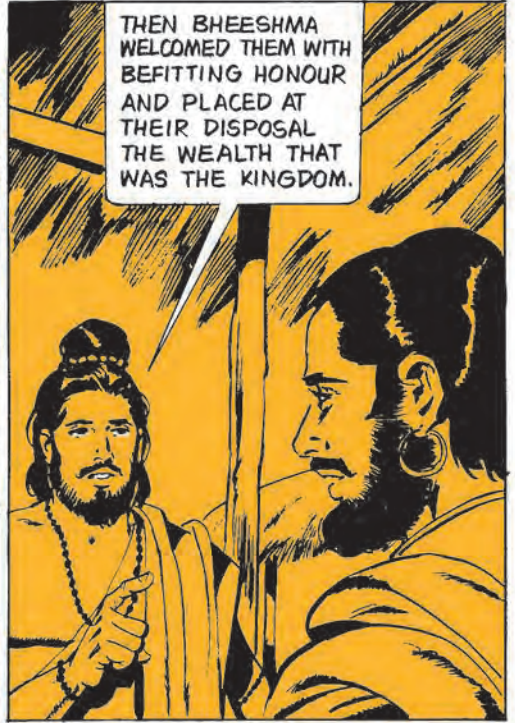
"THEN THERE CAME BHEESHMA, DHRITARASHTRA, VIDURA, SATYAVATI, AMBIKA, AMBALIKA, GANDHARI AND OTHER LADIES OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD, AND THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA ADORNED WITH JEWELS AND ORNAMENTS."



"THE KAURAVAS BOWED TO THE RISHIS AND THE CITIZENS PROSTRATED THEMSELVES BEFORE THE HOLY GROUP."

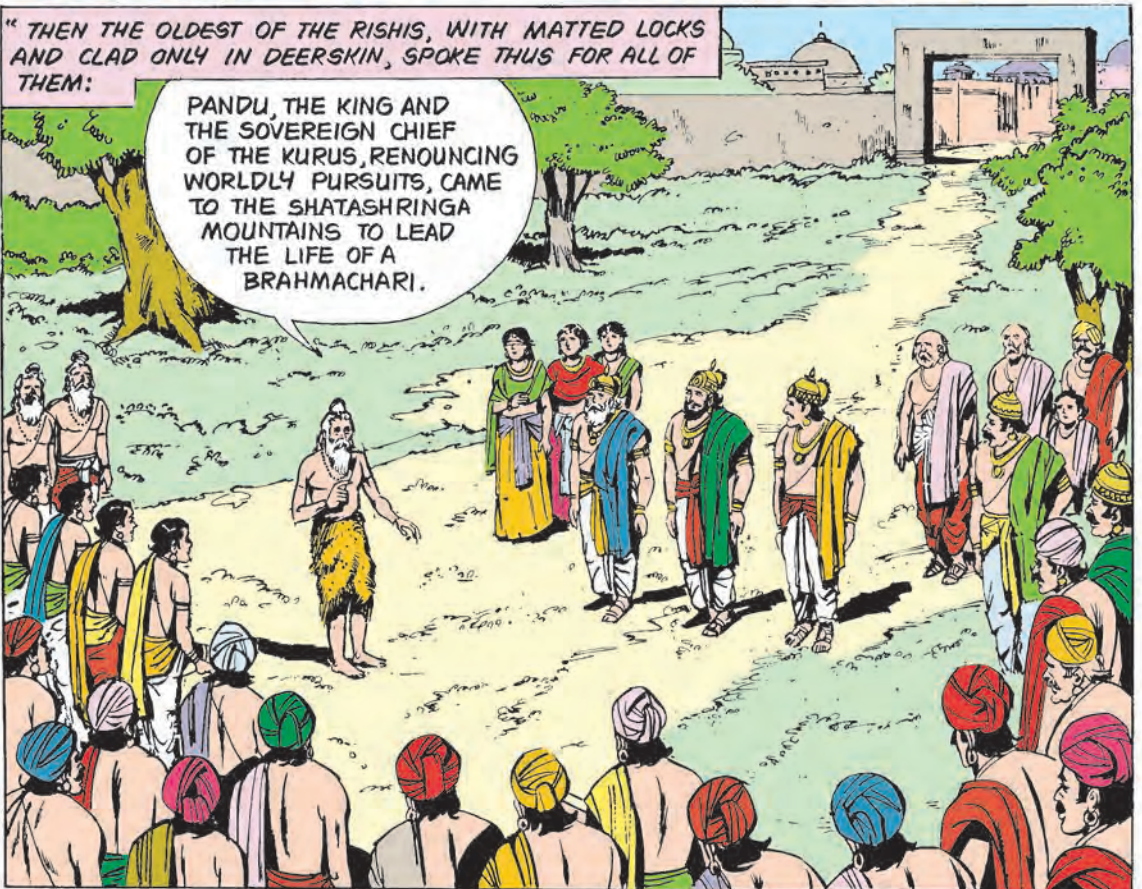


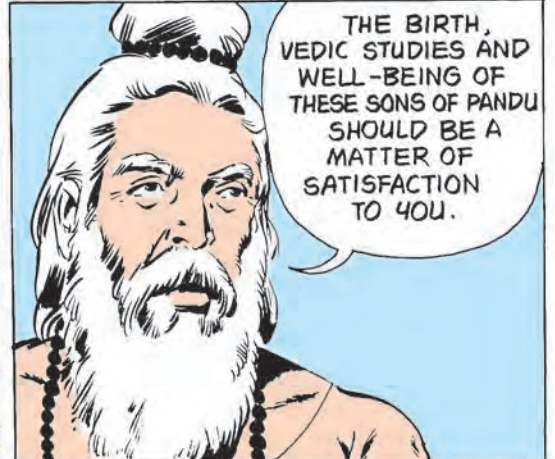
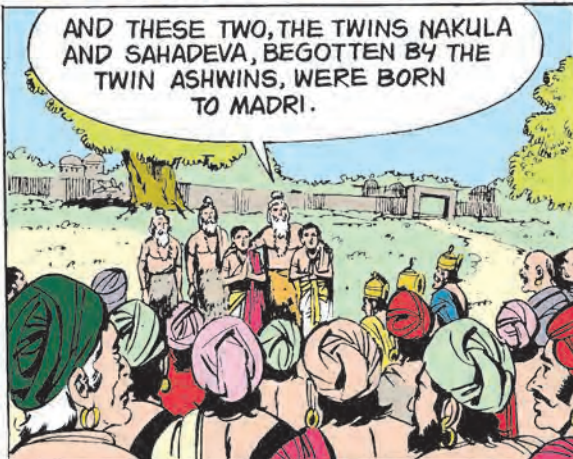
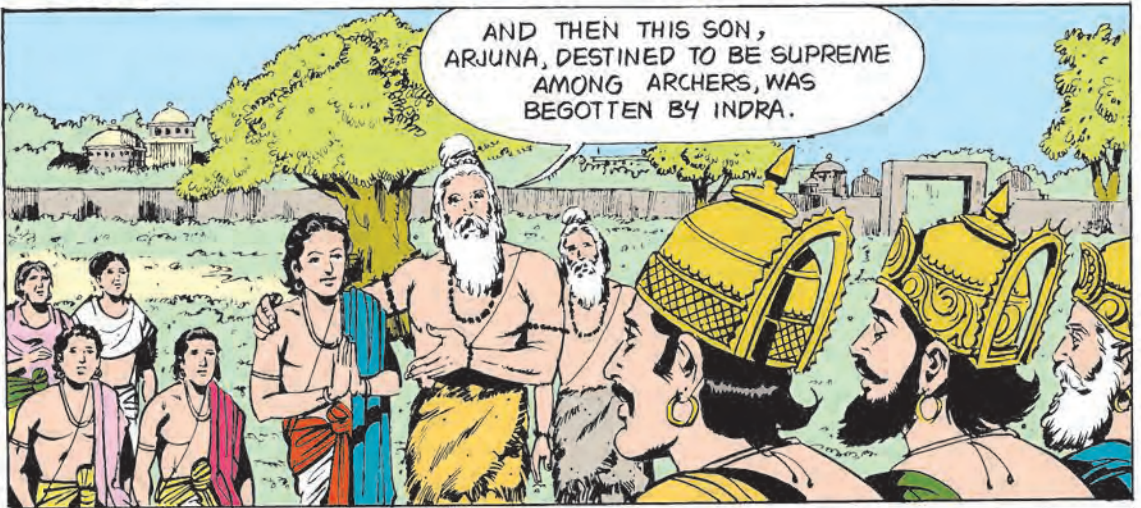
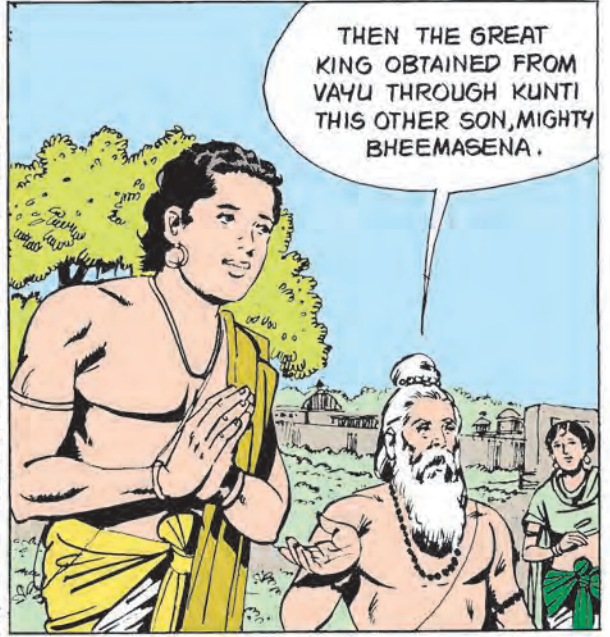
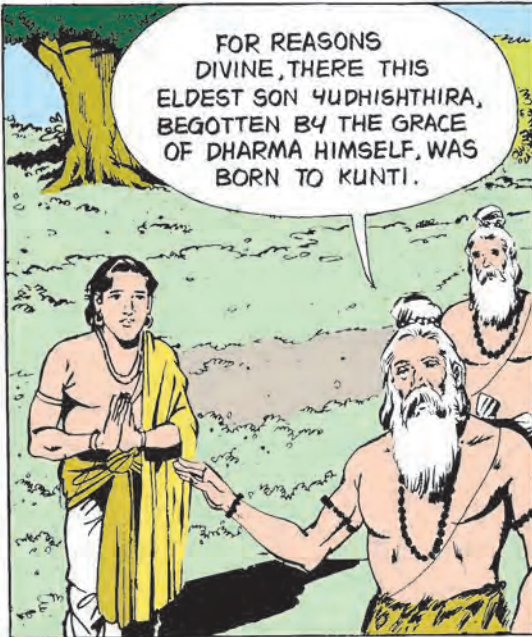
THEN BHEESHMA WELCOMED THEM WITH BEFITTING HONOUR AND PLACED AT THEIR DISPOSAL THE WEALTH THAT WAS THE KINGDOM.

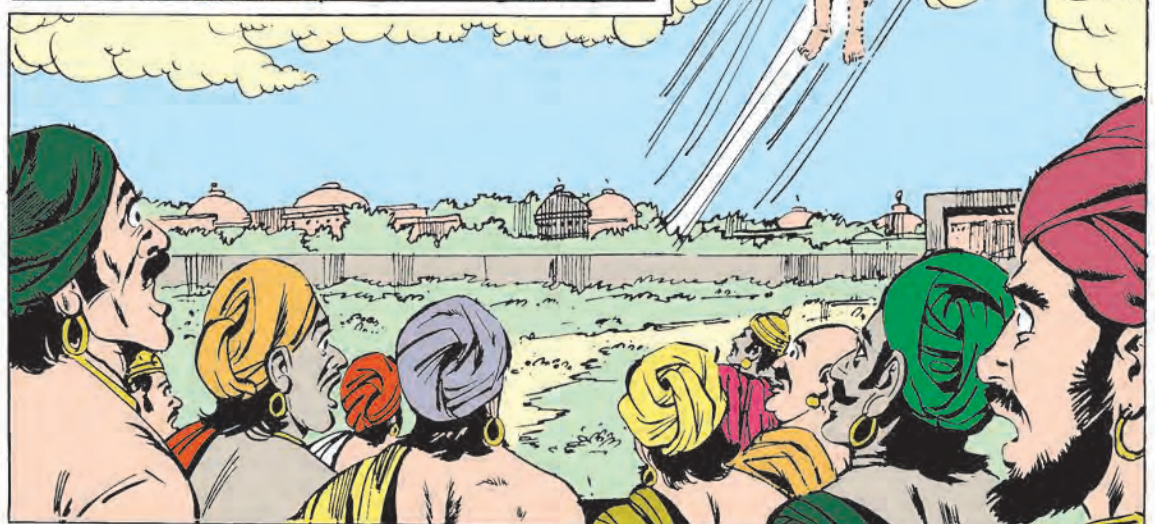
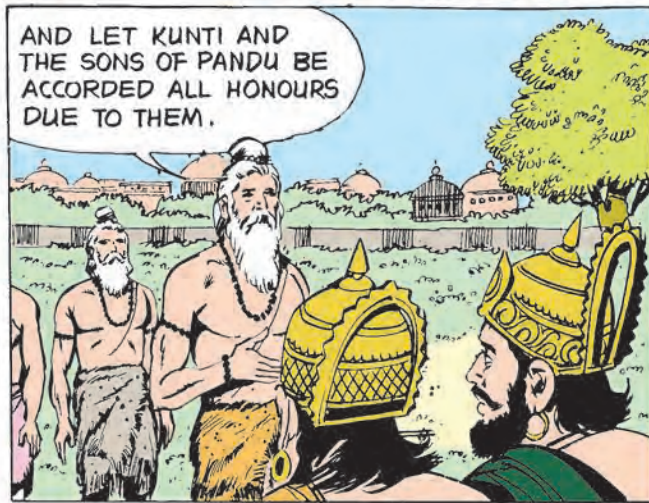
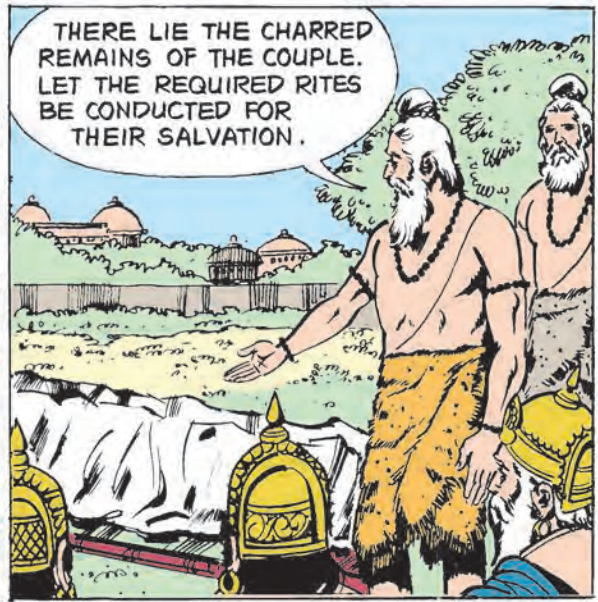


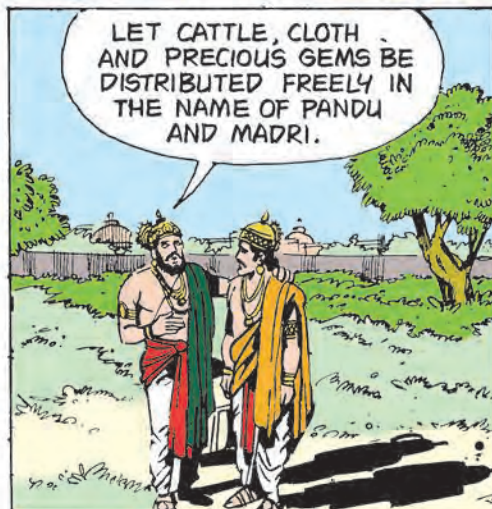
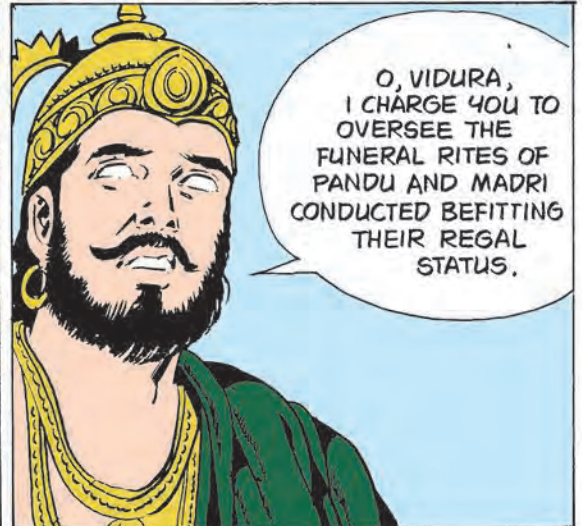
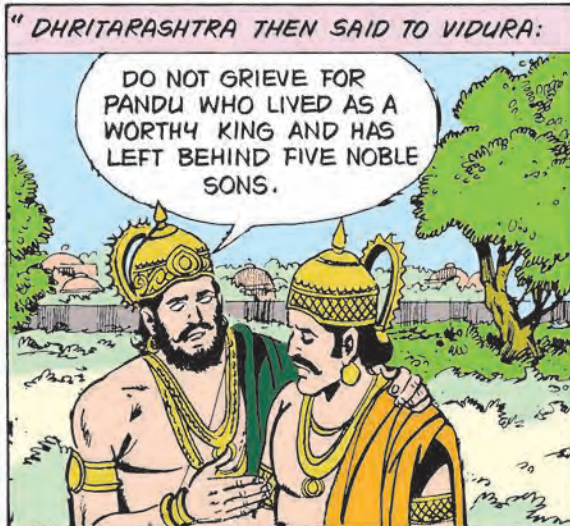
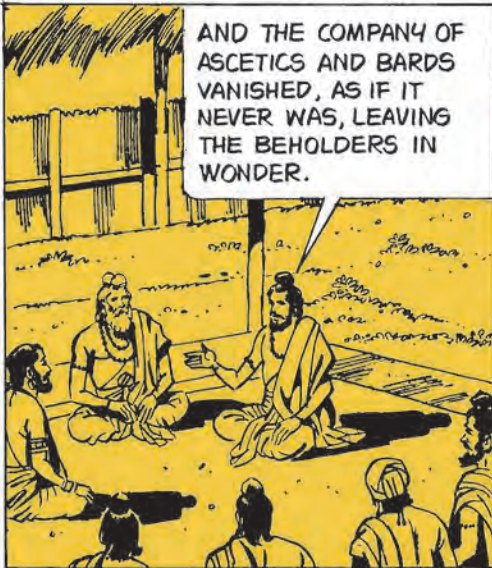
"THEN THE OLDEST OF THE RISHIS, WITH MATTED LOCKS AND CLAD ONLY IN DEERSKIN, SPOKE THUS FOR ALL OF THEM:

PANDU, THE KING AND THE SOVEREIGN CHIEF OF THE KURUS, RENOUNCING WORLDLY PURSUITS, CAME TO THE SHATASHRINGA MOUNTAINS TO LEAD THE LIFE OF A BRAHMACHARI.

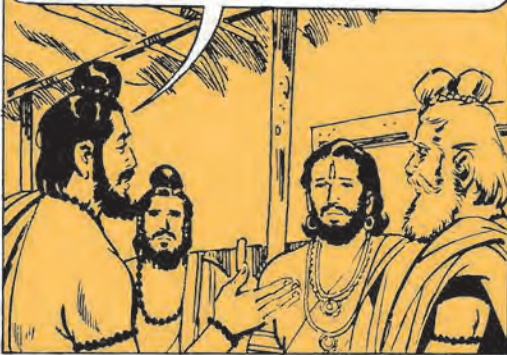








AFTER CONSULTING BHEESHMA, VIDURA SELECTED A SACRED SPOT FOR THE LAST RITES OF PANDU. THE COURTIER AND THE CITIZENS THEN COVERED WITH FLOWERS, THE BIER WHICH CARRIED THE REMAINS OF THE KING AND HIS CONSORT, AND DECKED IT WITH RICH HANGINGS AND FRAGRANT GARLANDS.

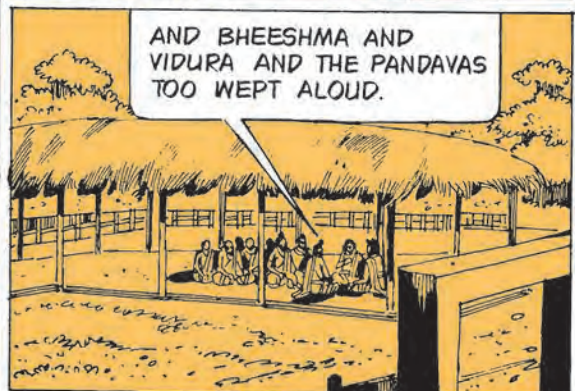


"THE BIER WAS CARRIED AWAY FROM THE CITY BY MEN, AND THE CORTEGE WAS LED BY PRIESTS, TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF DIRGE AND DRUMS. COMMONERS FOLLOWED THE CORTEGE LAMENTING LOUDLY:

O KING,
WHERE HAVE
YOU GONE, LEAVING
US BEREFT AND
DESOLATE?



AND BHEESHMA AND
VIDURA AND THE PANDAVAS
TOO WEPT ALOUD.



"THUS THEY REACHED THE EXPANSIVE BANKS OF THE GANGA WHERE THE BIER WAS LAID DOWN."



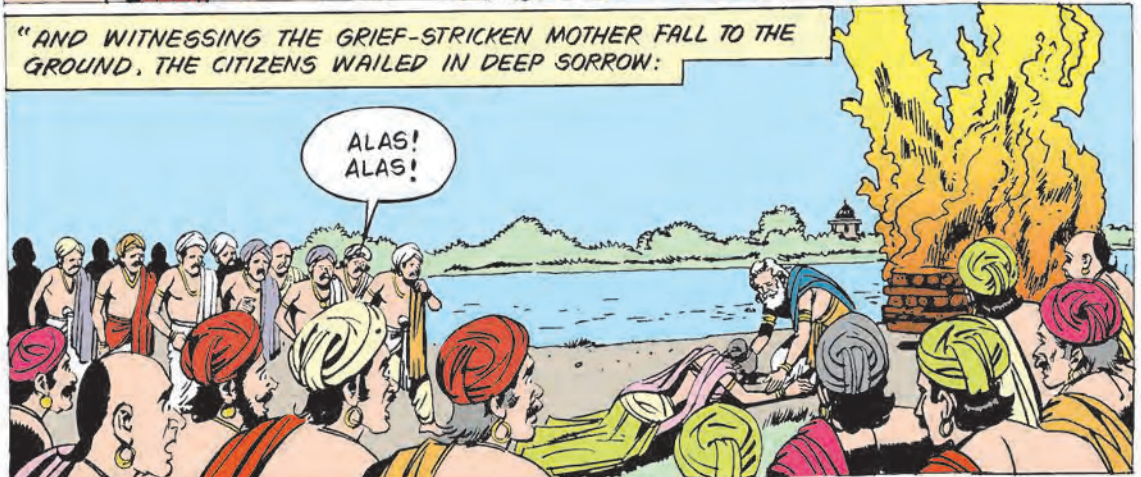
GUIDED BY THE PRIESTS, THEY CONCLUDED THE FUNERAL RITES AND SET FIRE TO THE REMAINS OF THE BODIES.



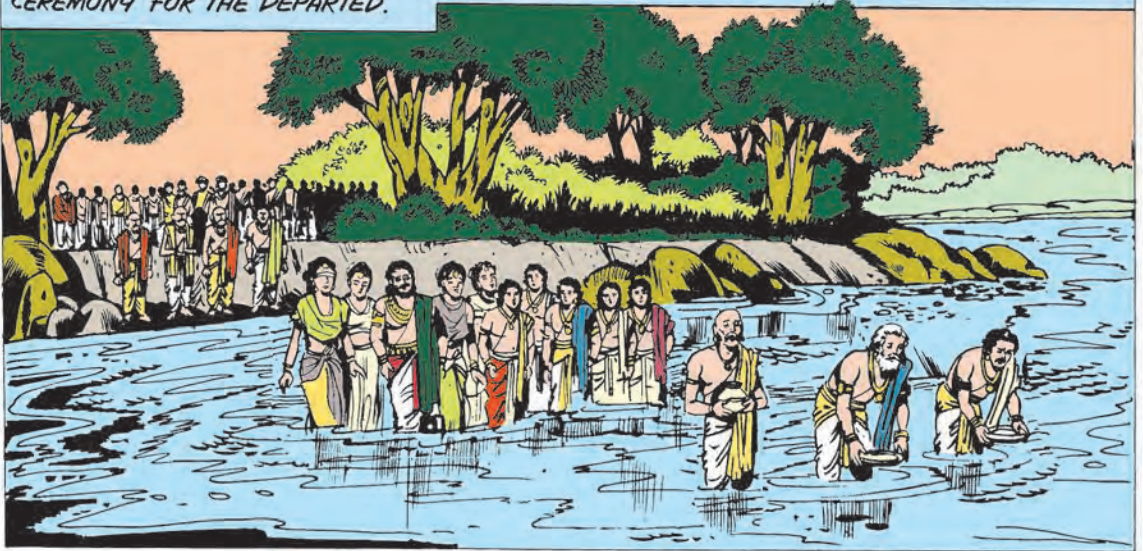
"AS THE FLAMES LEAPT UP, AMBALIKA CRIED OUT IN ANGUISH:



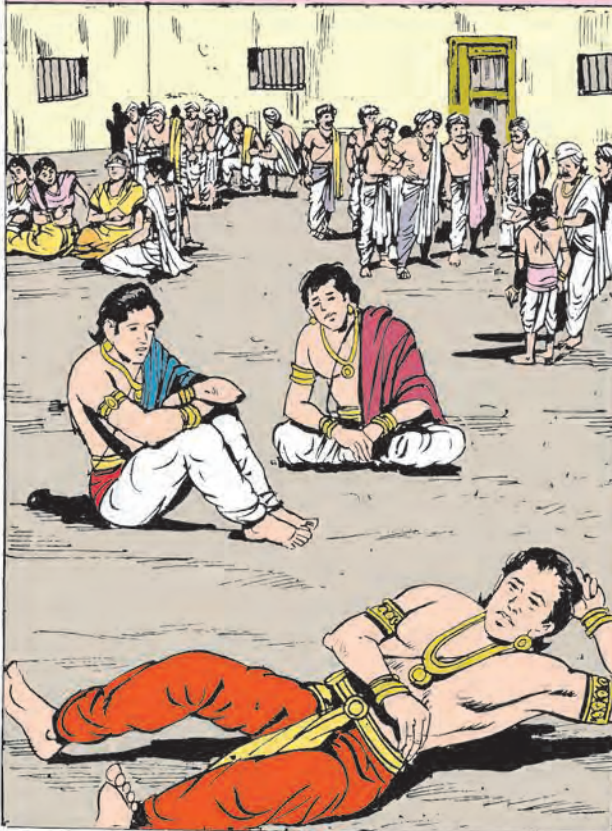
"AND WITNESSING THE GRIEF-STRICKEN MOTHER FALL TO THE GROUND, THE CITIZENS WAILED IN DEEP SORROW:



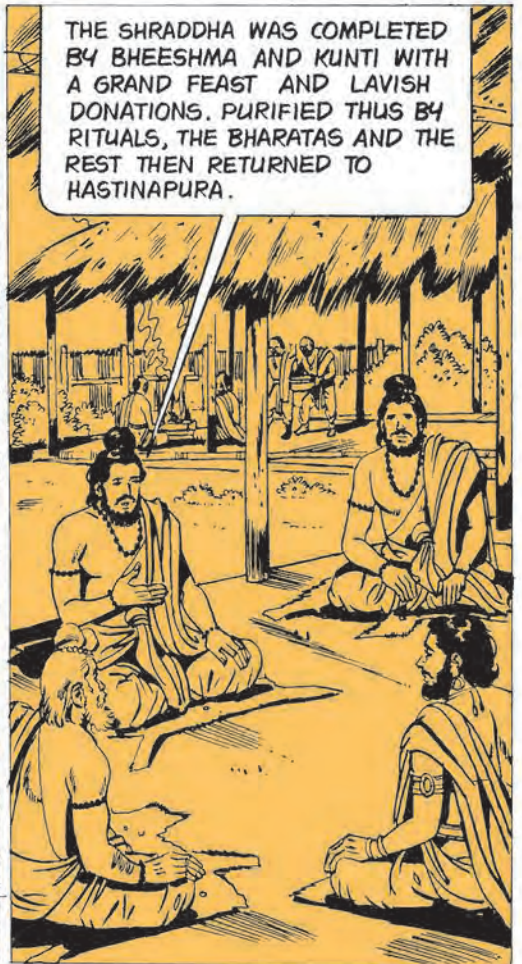
"THE DISTRAUGHT CRY OF KUNTI MOVED THE HEART OF EVEN THE BIRDS AND BEASTS, AND MADE THE WISE BHEESHMA AND VIDURA SAD. WITH TEAR-DIMMED EYES THEY, ALONG WITH DHRTIRASHTRA, THE PANDAVAS AND THE KURU LADIES, PERFORMED THE LAST CEREMONY FOR THE DEPARTED.



"THE CITIZENS THEN CONSOLED THE DISTRESSED SONS OF PANDU. YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE, ENGULFED IN SORROW LIKE THE PANDAVAS, MOURED WITH THEM FOR FULL TWELVE DAYS.

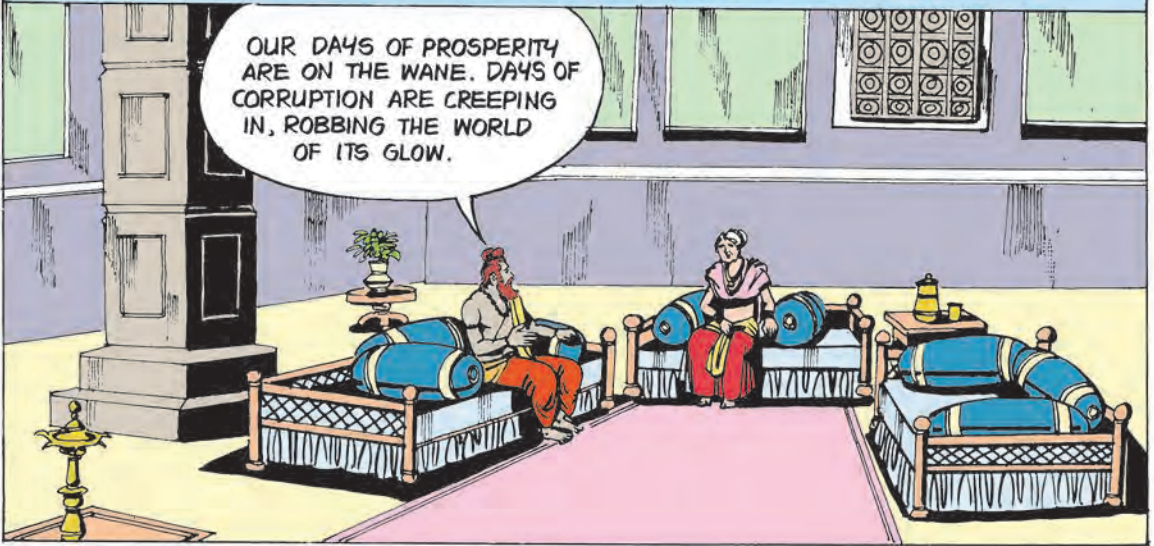


THE SHRADDHA WAS COMPLETED BY BHEESHMA AND KUNTI WITH A GRAND FEAST AND LAVISH DONATIONS. PURIFIED THUS BY RITUALS, THE BHARATAS AND THE REST THEN RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA.



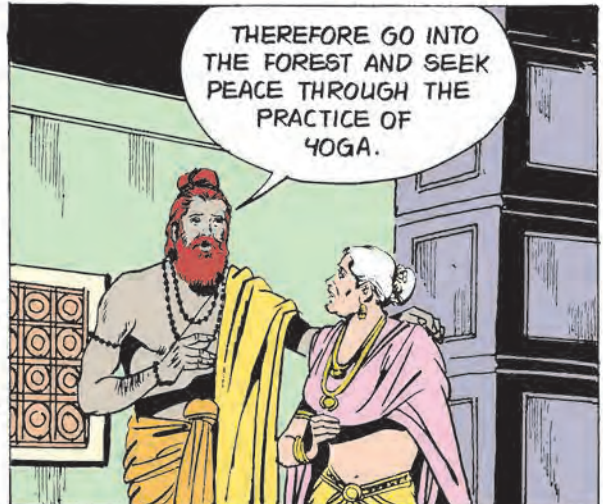
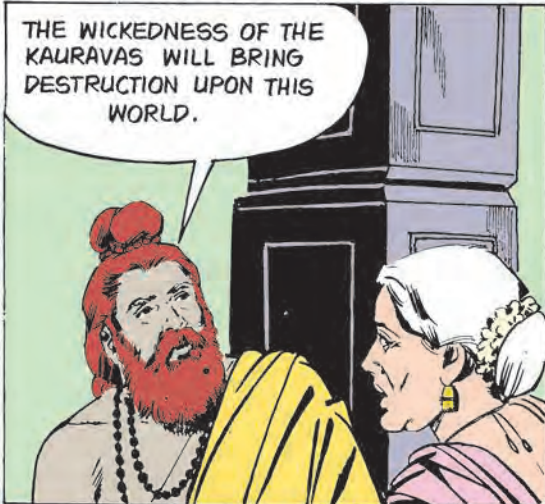
"THEN MY ESTEEMED GURU VYASA CAME TO SATYAVATI, HIS MOTHER, AND SAID:

OUR DAYS OF PROSPERITY
ARE ON THE WANE. DAYS OF
CORRUPTION ARE CREEPING
IN, ROBBING THE WORLD
OF ITS GLOW.



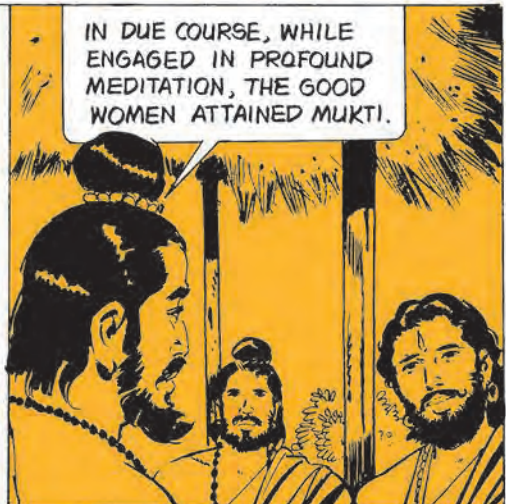
THE WICKEDNESS OF THE
KAURAVAS WILL BRING
DESTRUCTION UPON THIS
WORLD.

THEREFORE GO INTO
THE FOREST AND SEEK
PEACE THROUGH THE
PRACTICE OF
YOGA.



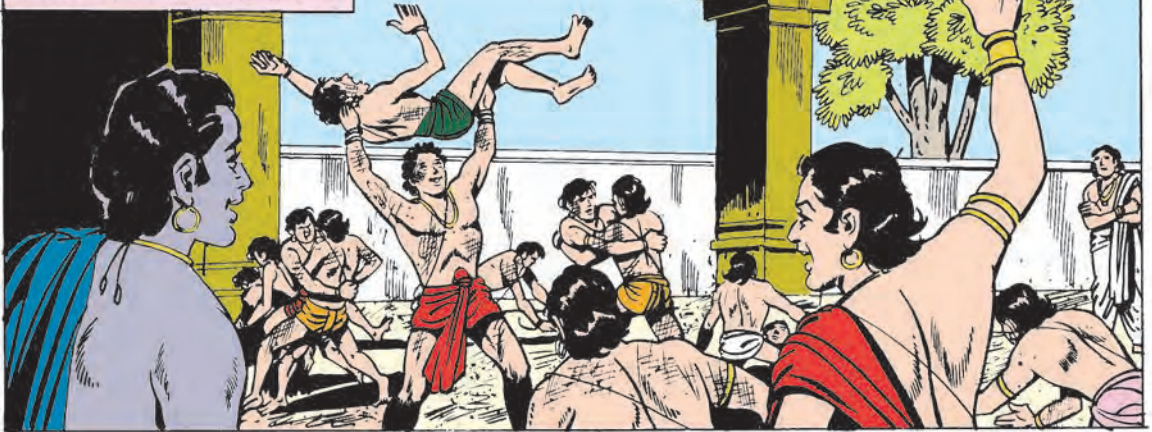
"HEEDING THE WORDS OF VYASA, AND WITH THE
APPROVAL OF BHEESHMA, SATYAVATI ACCOMPANIED
BY AMBIKA AND AMBALIKA, WENT TO THE FOREST.*

IN DUE COURSE, WHILE
ENGAGED IN PROFOUND
MEDITATION, THE GOOD
WOMEN ATTAINED MUKTI.



* AFTER LEADING THE LIFE OF A HOUSEHOLDER TILL THE
AGE OF USUALLY 50 YEARS, PEOPLE LIVED IN PLACES
AWAY FROM HUMAN HABITATIONS, EITHER ALONE OR IN
SMALL GROUPS, GIVING UP THE COMFORTS OF LIFE IN
PREPARATION FOR THE FOURTH STAGE — SANNYASA.

"MEANWHILE THE PANDAVAS GREW UP IN AFFLUENCE IN THEIR FATHER'S PALACE, AND PROVED THEIR SUPERIOR STRENGTH EVEN WHILE AT PLAY WITH THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA."



"IN RUNNING..."



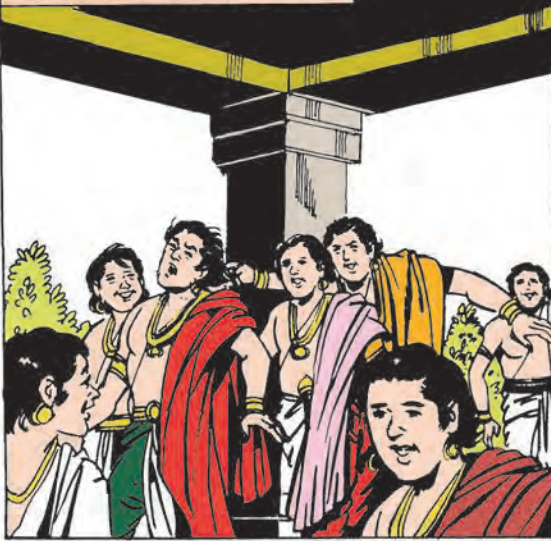
"...IN CONSUMING FOOD..."



"...AND IN SCATTERING DUST, BHEEMASENA BEAT THEM ALL."



"HE PULLED THEIR HAIR ...



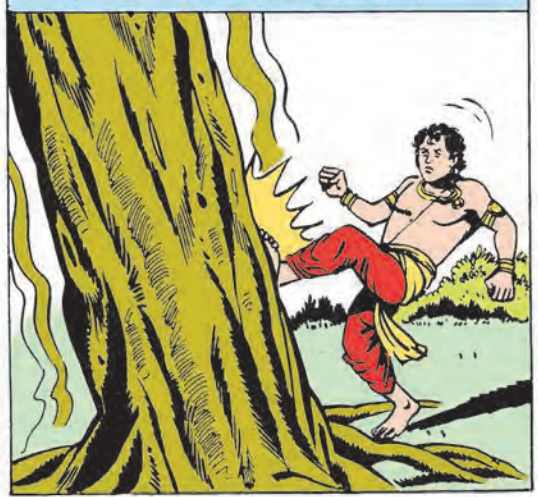
"...AND, LAUGHING ALL THE WHILE, MADE THEM FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES.



"WHEN THE SONS OF DHRTARASHTRA CLAMBERED UP THE TREES TO PLUCK FRUIT ...



"...BHEEMA WOULD SET THE TREE ALL A-TREMBLE WITH A MIGHTY KICK.



"AND DOWN WOULD COME FRUIT, FRUIT-PLUCKERS AND ALL.



THE 100 SONS OF DHRTARASHTRA WERE NO MATCH FOR ONE BHEEMA. HOWEVER, HIS DISPLAY OF RUGGED STRENGTH WAS PROMPTED BY CHILDISH GLEE AND NOT BY ILL WILL.

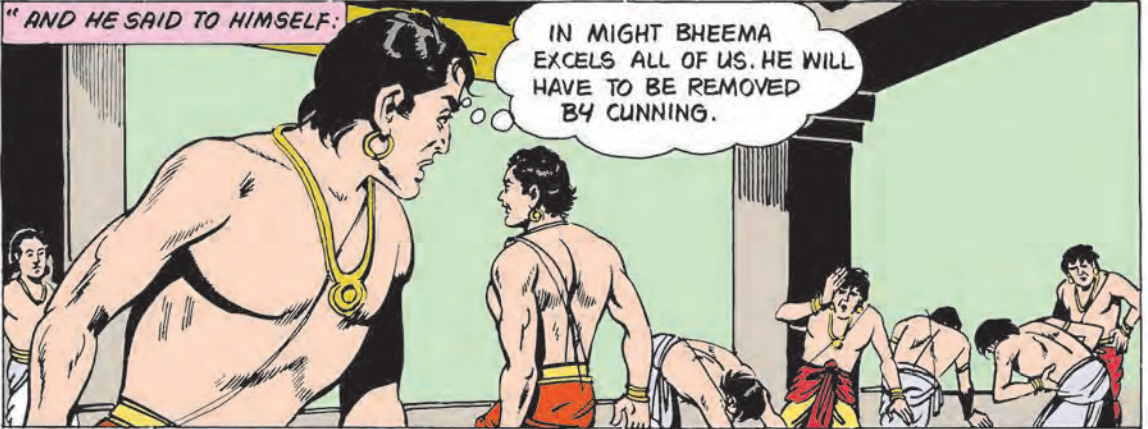


"BUT THIS OBVIOUS STRENGTH OF BHEEMA AROUSED THE HOSTILITY OF DURYODHANA, THE ELDEST SON OF DHRTARASHTRA."



"AND HE SAID TO HIMSELF:

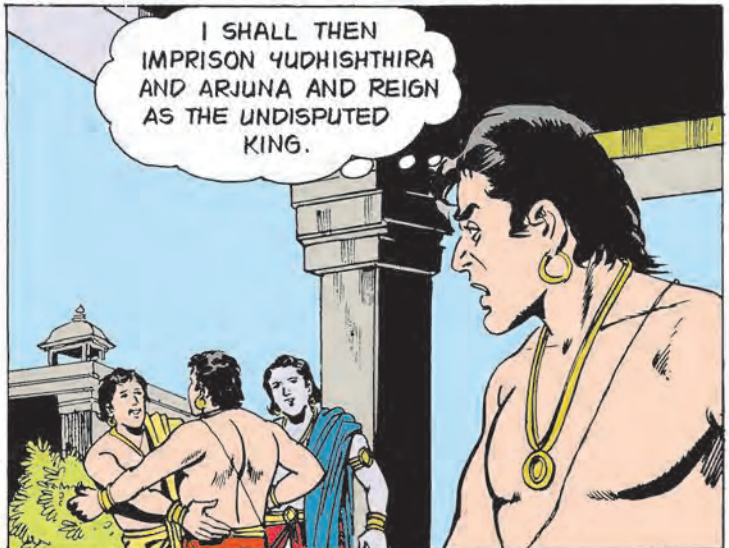
IN MIGHT BHEEMA
EXCELS ALL OF US. HE WILL
HAVE TO BE REMOVED
BY CUNNING.



I SHALL THROW
HIM INTO THE GANGA
WHEN HE IS
ASLEEP.



I SHALL THEN
IMPRISON YUDHISHTHIRA
AND ARJUNA AND REIGN
AS THE UNDISPUTED
KING.

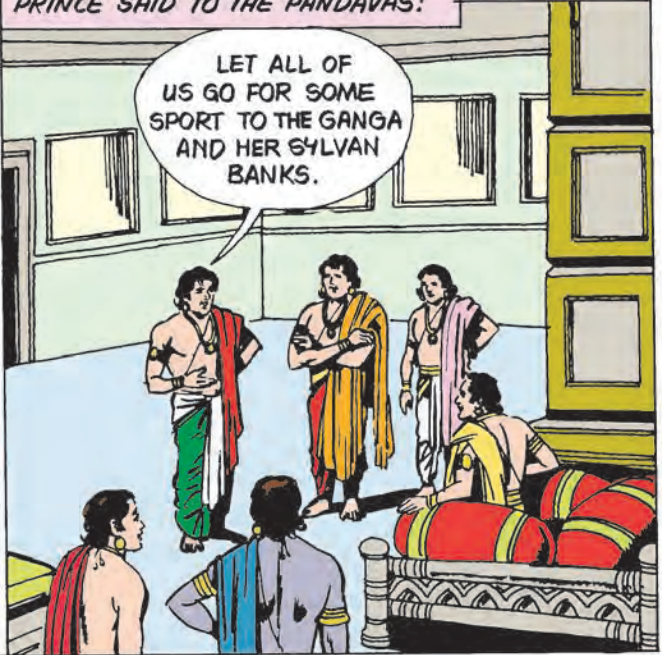




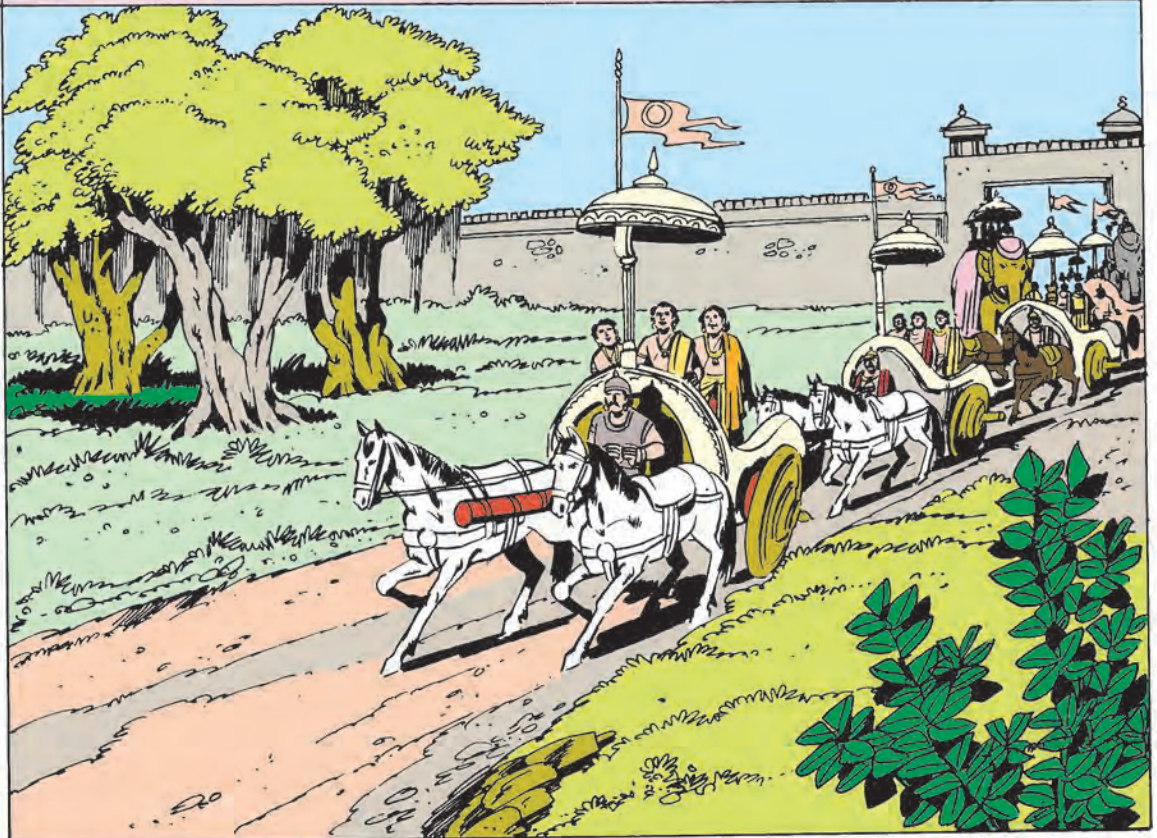
RESOLUTE IN HIS WICKED THOUGHT, DURYODHANA KEPT A SHARP WATCH FOR AN OPPORTUNITY. AND, O MONARCH, AT LENGTH HE SET UP AN ALLURING CAMP FOR WATER SPORTS AT PRAMANAKOTI ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA. HE HAD IT ADORNED WITH RICH CLOTH HANGINGS AND EMBELLISHED WITH GAY FLAGS. AND THE CUISINE THERE WAS EQUIPPED TO SERVE FOOD AND DRINK OF CHOICE TASTE.

"AND WHEN ALL WAS COMPLETED, THE CRAFTY PRINCE SAID TO THE PANDAVAS:

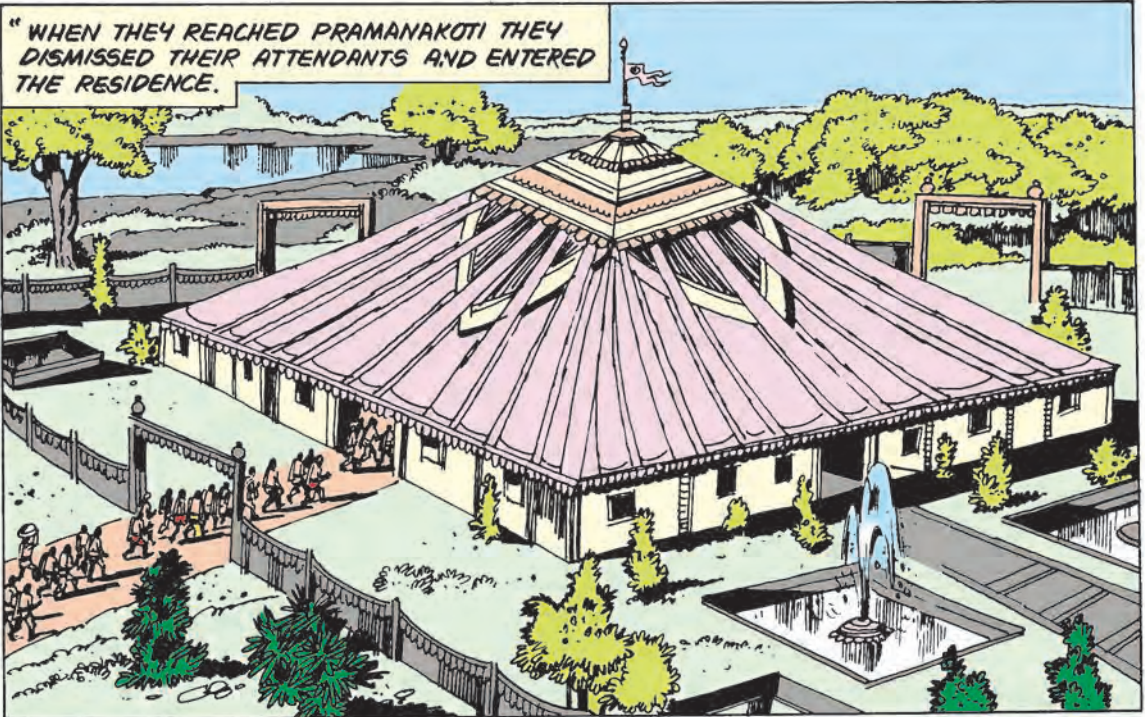
LET ALL OF US GO FOR SOME SPORT TO THE GANGA AND HER GYLVAN BANKS.



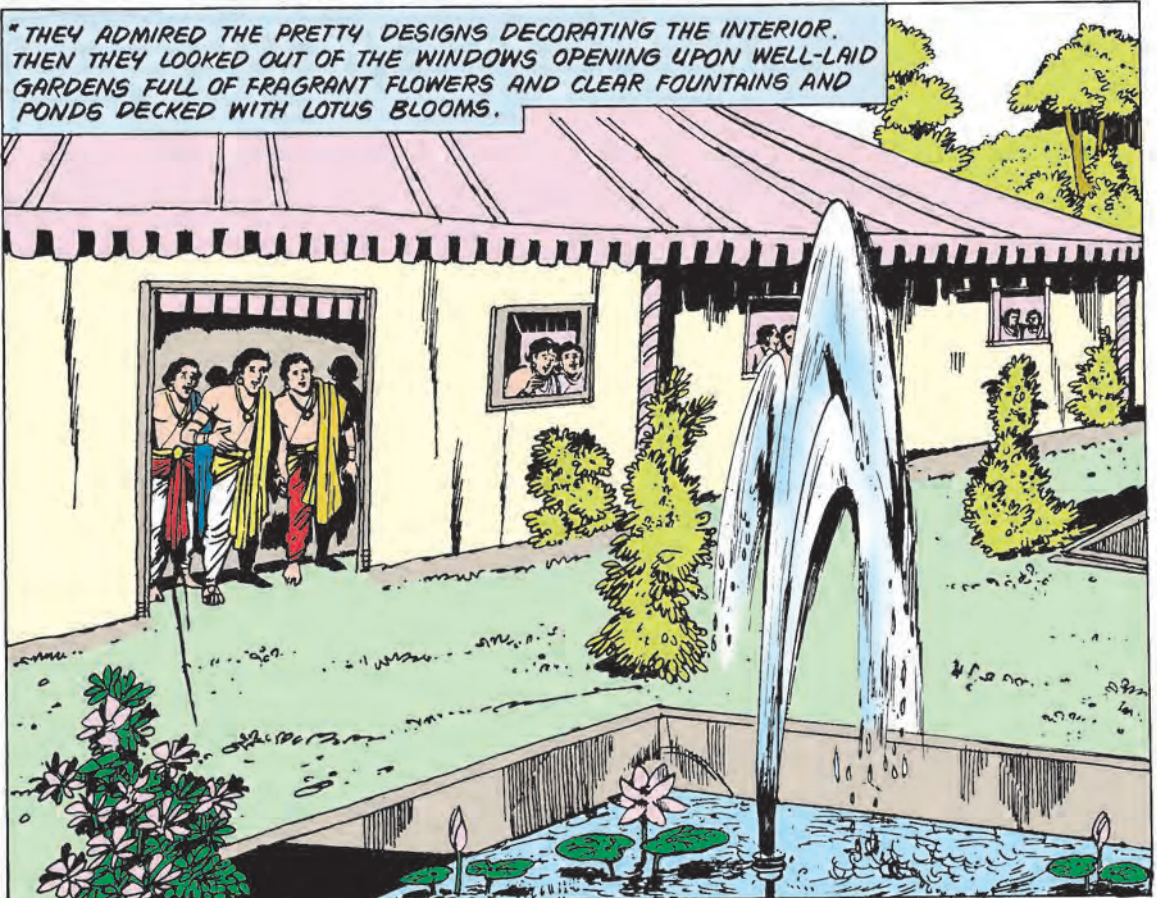
"WHEN YUDHISHTHIRA AGREED TO IT, THE PANDAVAS AND THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA PROCEEDED TO THAT SPOT, SOME IN CHARIOTS AND SOME ON ELEPHANTS.



"WHEN THEY REACHED PRAMANAKOTI THEY DISMISSED THEIR ATTENDANTS AND ENTERED THE RESIDENCE."



"THEY ADMIRERD THE PRETTY DESIGNS DECORATING THE INTERIOR, THEN THEY LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOWS OPENING UPON WELL-LAID GARDENS FULL OF FRAGRANT FLOWERS AND CLEAR FOUNTAINS AND PONDS DECKED WITH LOTUS BLOOMS."



"AFTER THE KAURAVAS AND THE PANDAVAS HAD THEIR FILL OF PLEASURES..."



"...THEY TOOK TURNS AT FEEDING EACH OTHER WITH CHOICE DELICACIES."



"MEANWHILE DURYODHANA HAD ALREADY PREPARED HEAVILY POISONED FOOD TO KILL BHEEMASENA."



"CONCEALING HIS EVIL DESIGNS WITH SWEET SMILES, HE WENT OVER TO BHEEMA..."



"...AND FED HIM FREELY WITH THE POISONED FOOD."



"THEN ALL OF THEM MOVED OVER TO THE RIVER TO AMUSE THEMSELVES IN THE WATER.



"AFTER A WHILE THEY CAME OUT OF THE WATER AND DRESSED THEMSELVES IN FRESH CLOTHES.



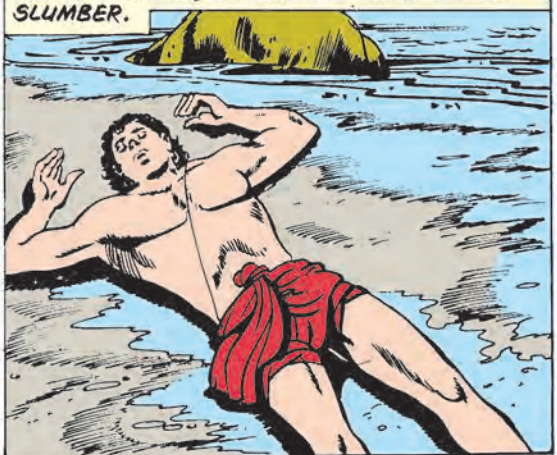
"BHEEMA HAD BEEN MORE VIGOROUS THAN THE OTHERS IN THE WATER.



"SO WHEN HE CAME OUT, HE FLUNG HIMSELF ON THE GROUND IN SHEER FATIGUE.



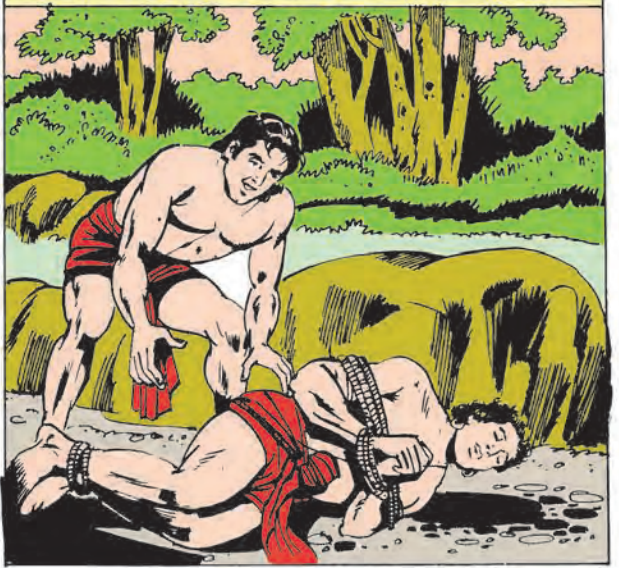
"AND THE STRONG POISON, AND THE SOFT RIVER BREEZE, LULLED HIM INTO A DEEP SLUMBER.



SEEING THIS DURYODHANA BOUND HIM WITH STRONG REEDS...



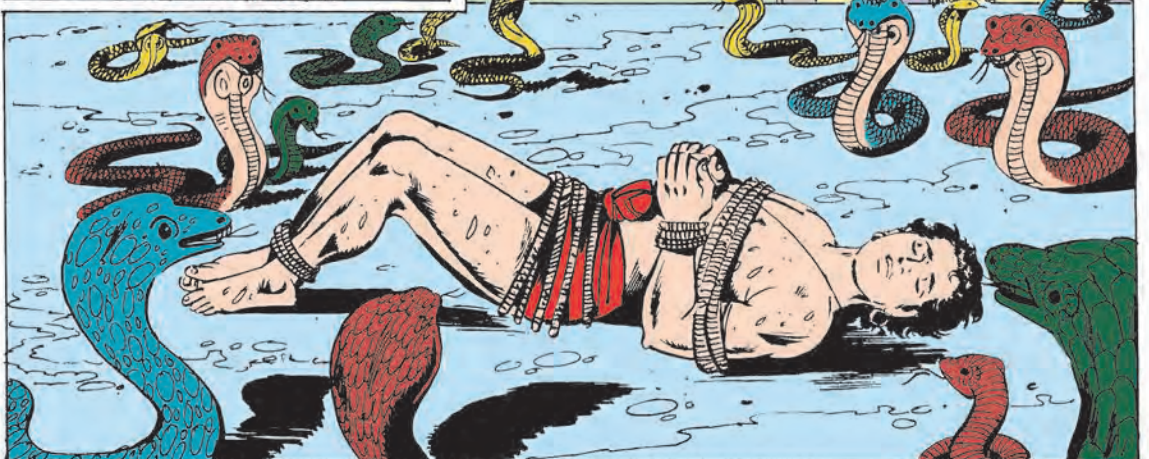
"...AND ROLLED HIM DOWN INTO THE WATER.



"THE UNCONSCIOUS BHEEMA SANK, DOWN, DOWN...

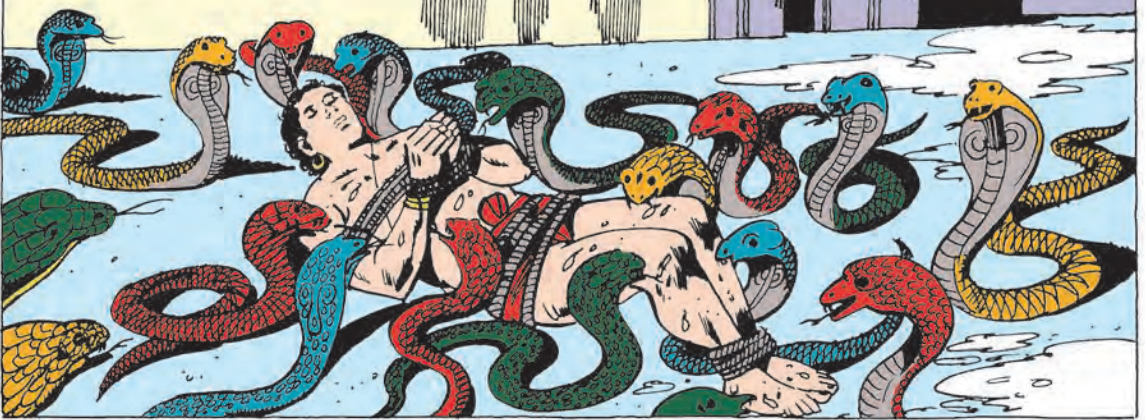


"...DOWN TO THE DEPTHS OF THE NAGA* KINGDOM.



* ACCORDING TO MANY SCHOLARS THE NAGAS WERE A RACE OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM THE ARYANS FREELY MIXED.

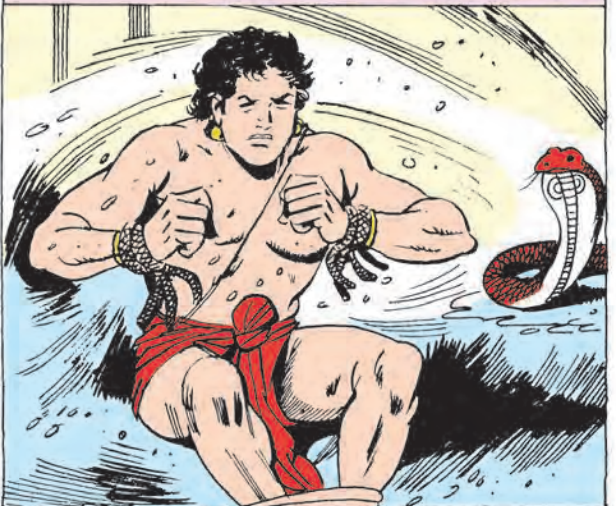
"THE NAGAS ATTACKED HIM BY THE THOUSANDS AND BIT HIM, RELEASING THE DEADLY POISON FROM THEIR FANGS.



"THE SNAKE-POISON ACTED AS AN ANTIDOTE AND BHEEMA REGAINED HIS SENSES.



"HE SNAPPED THE REEDS THAT BOUND HIM AND...



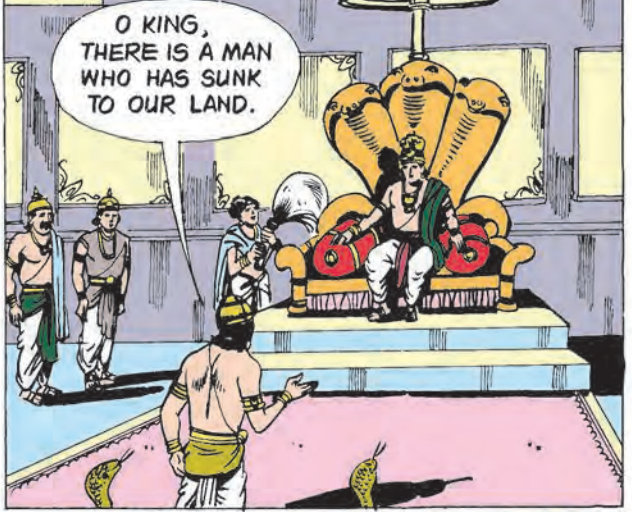
"...KILLED THE SNAKES BY DASHING THEM TO THE GROUND.



"THE FEW WHO ESCAPED HIM, FLED FOR LIFE..."



"... AND RUSHED TO VABUKI THEIR KING AND SAID:



WE GUESS THAT HE WAS POISONED. HE WAS FETTERED AND INERT WHEN WE SAW HIM. HE WOKE UP WHEN WE BIT HIM.

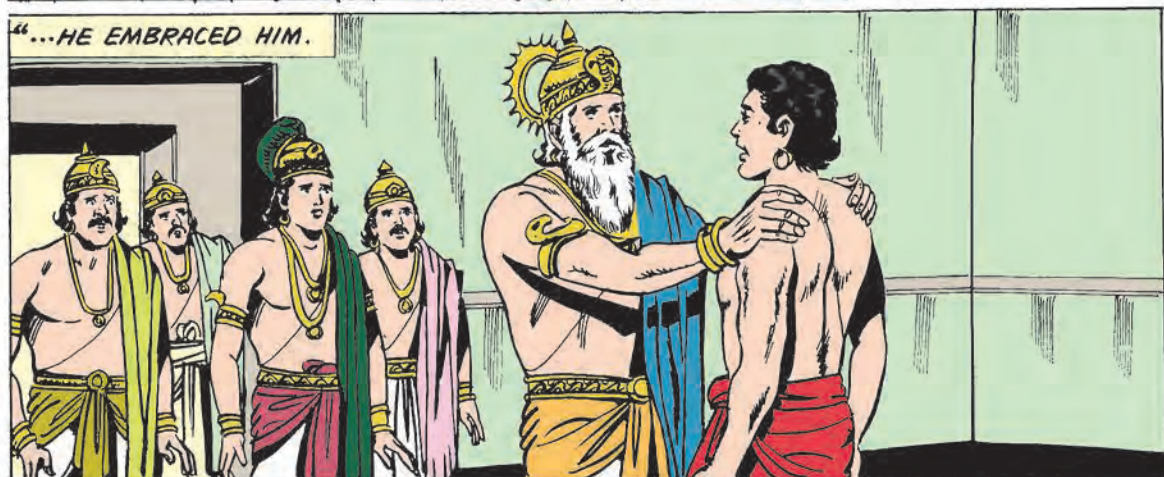
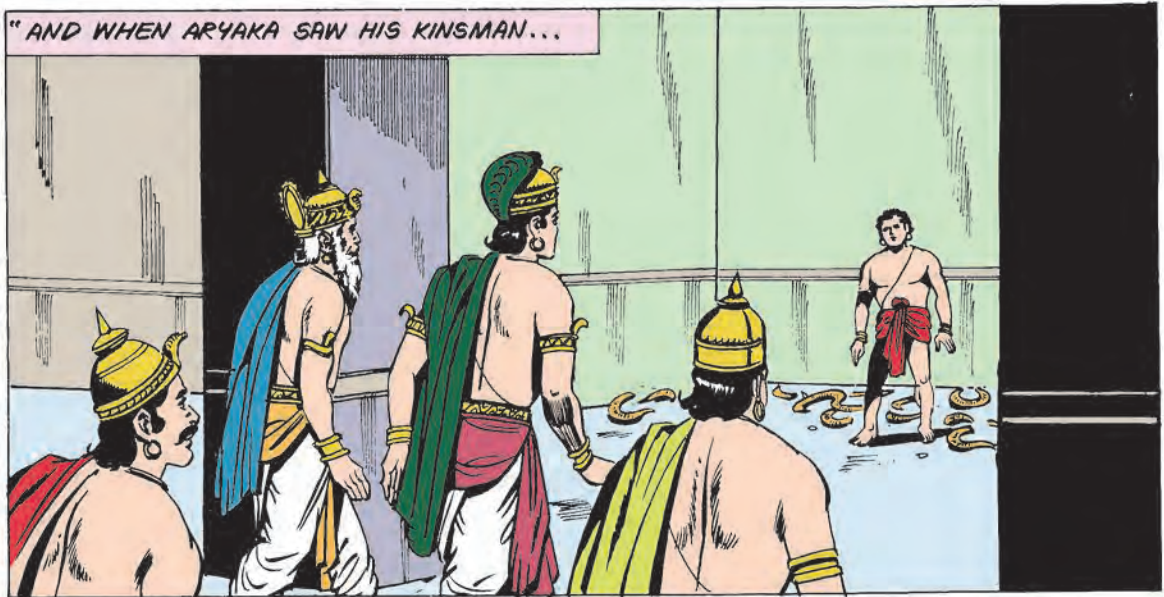
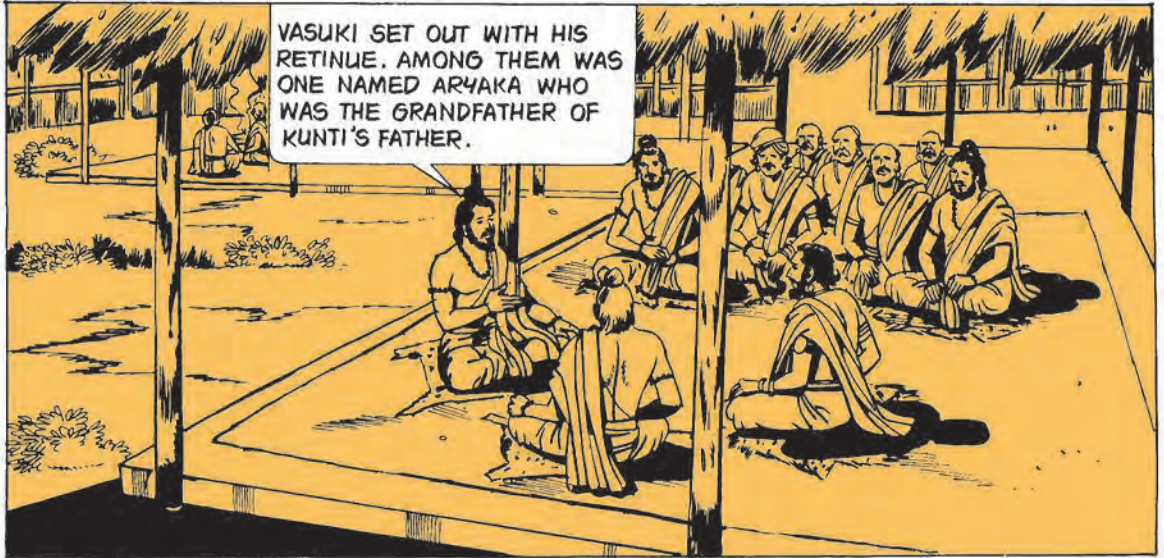


THEN HE FREED HIMSELF AND ATTACKED US.



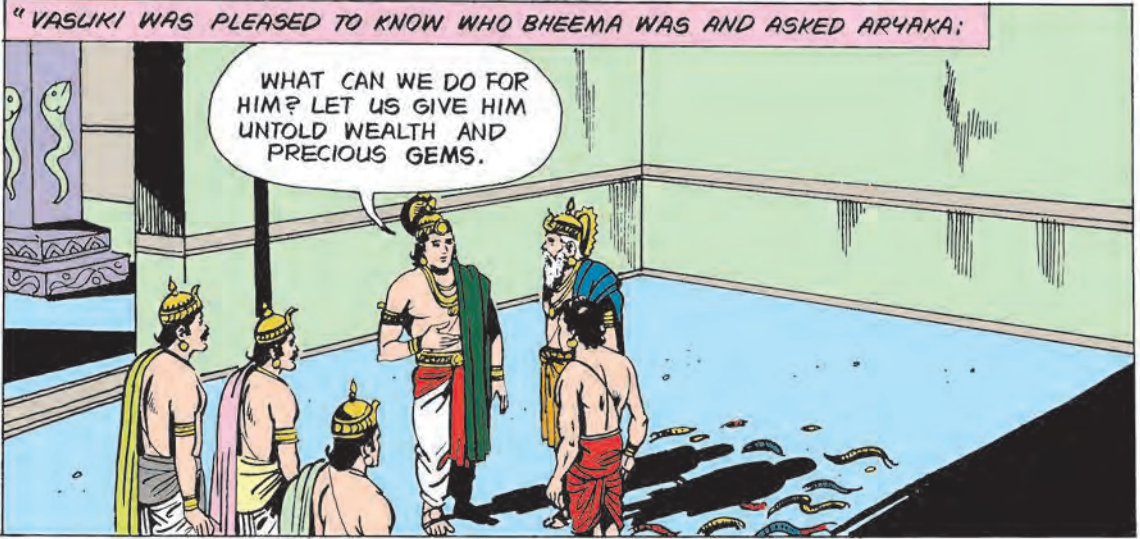
PLEASE COME AND SEE WHO HE IS.





"VASUKI WAS PLEASED TO KNOW WHO BHEEMA WAS AND ASKED ARYAKA:

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR HIM? LET US GIVE HIM UNTOLD WEALTH AND PRECIOUS GEMS.



"ARYAKA REPLIED:

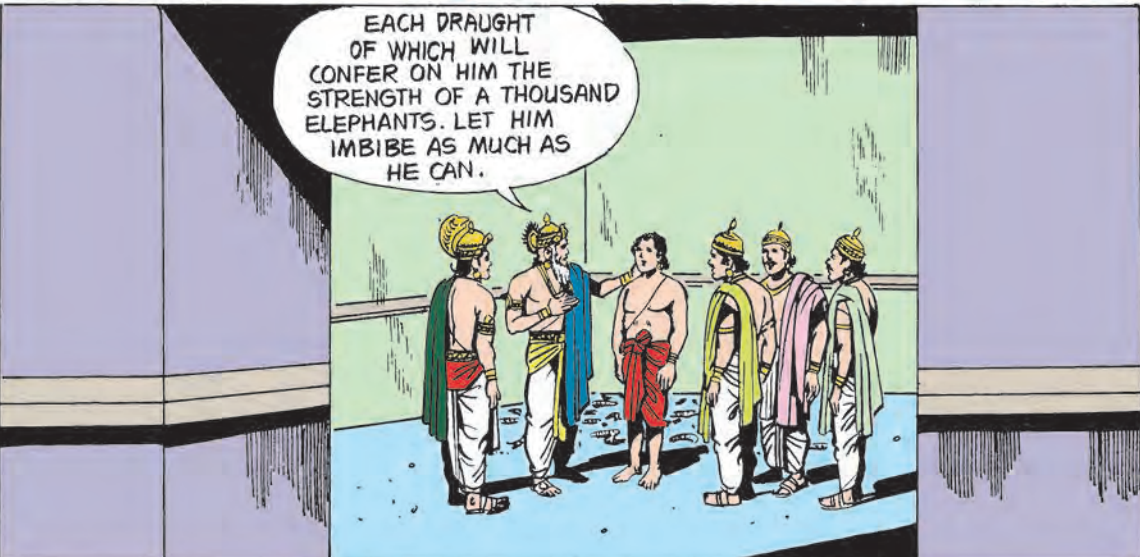
OF WHAT PRICE IS WEALTH WHEN HE HAS EARNED YOUR GOODWILL?

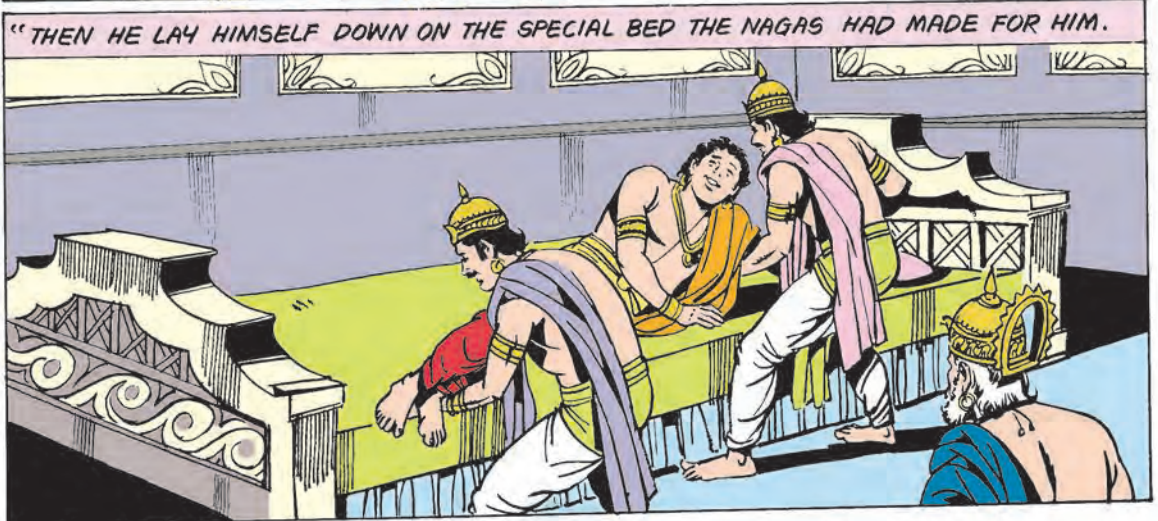
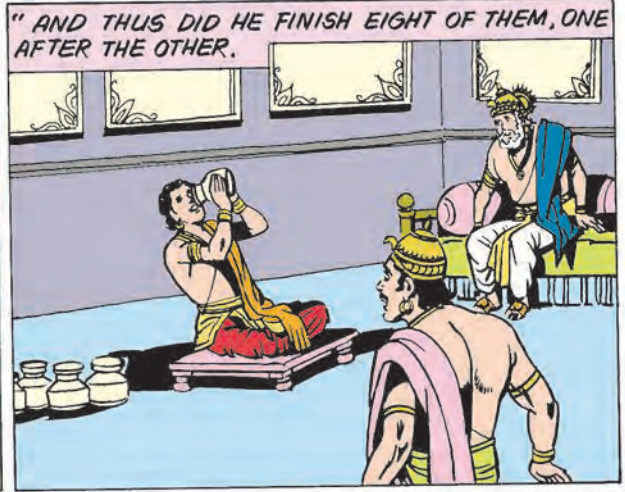
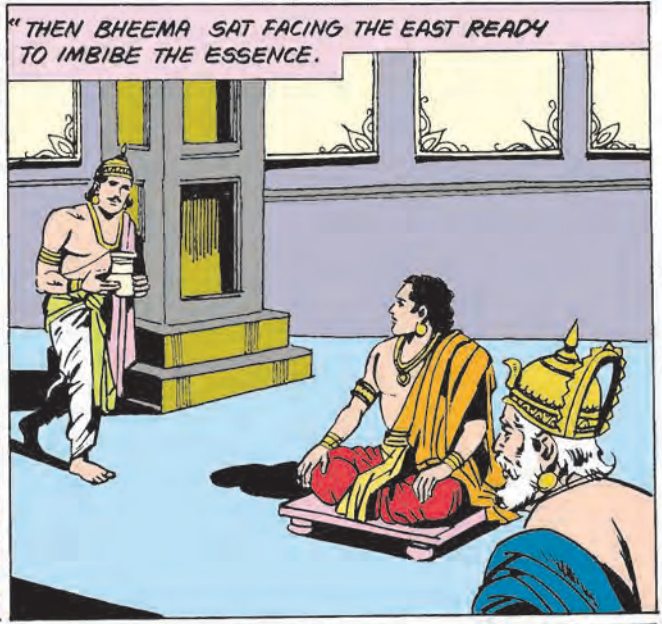


LET THIS PRINCE IMBIBE THE ESSENCE IN OUR POSSESSION.



EACH DRAUGHT OF WHICH WILL CONFER ON HIM THE STRENGTH OF A THOUSAND ELEPHANTS. LET HIM IMBIBE AS MUCH AS HE CAN.

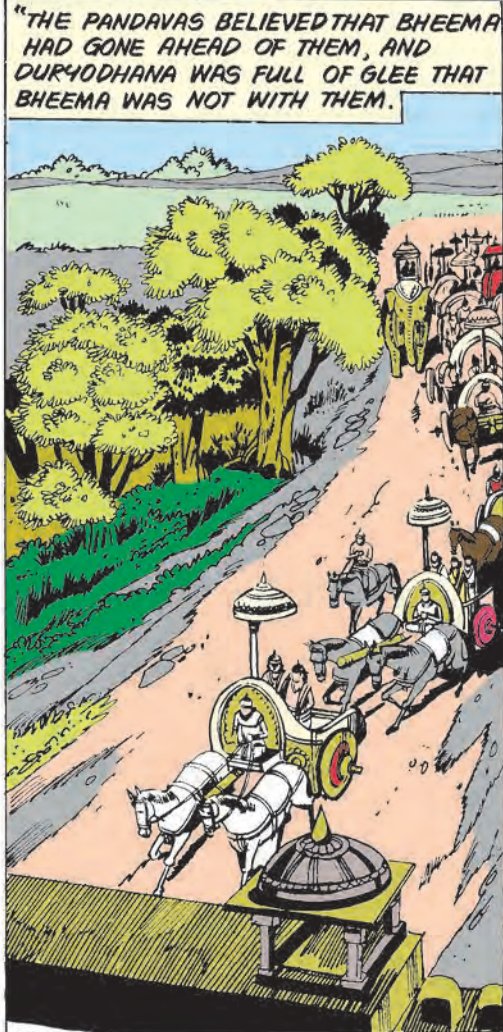




"MEANWHILE, AFTER HAVING HAD THEIR SURFEIT OF PLAY, THE PANDAVAS AND KAURAVAS LEFT THE CAMP."



"THE PANDAVAS BELIEVED THAT BHEEMA HAD GONE AHEAD OF THEM, AND DURYODHANA WAS FULL OF GLEE THAT BHEEMA WAS NOT WITH THEM."



THE HONEST YUDHISHTHIRA, O MONARCH, BELIEVED OTHERS TO BE AS HONEST AS HIMSELF.



"THEREFORE, WHEN HE REACHED THE PALACE, HE SAID TO HIS MOTHER:

WE THOUGHT THAT BHEEMA WAS ALREADY HERE. WHERE IS HE? HAS HE NOT COME BACK?



HAVE YOU SENT HIM ON AN ERRAND? HE WAS IN DEEP SLEEP WHEN WE SAW HIM LAST.



WAS IT SLEEP? OR WAS HE KILLED? I AM WORRIED.



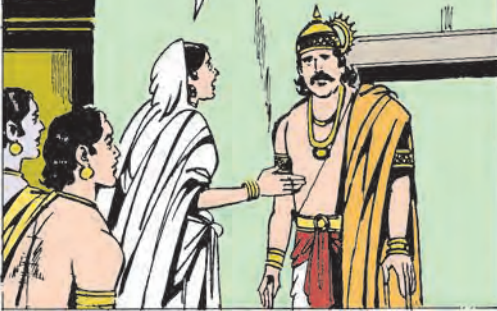
"HEARING THIS, KUNTI CRIED OUT IN DISMAY:

I HAVE NOT SEEN BHEEMA.



"THEN SHE SUMMONED VIDURA AND SAID:

O VIDURA,
BHEEMA IS MISSING.
ALL THE OTHERS
HAVE COME
BACK.



DURYODHANA
HATES HIM AND HE
IS RECKLESS AND
SPITEFUL.



HIS GREED FOR
THE THRONE MIGHT
EVEN HAVE PROMPTED
HIM TO MURDER
MY SON.



"VIDURA REPLIED:

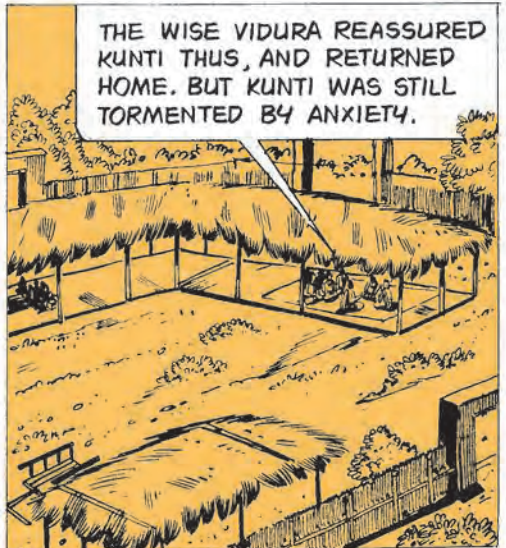
O GOOD WOMAN,
DO NOT SPEAK IN THIS
MANNER. IF YOU ACCUSE
DURYODHANA, HE MAY
TURN ON YOUR OTHER
SONS ALSO.



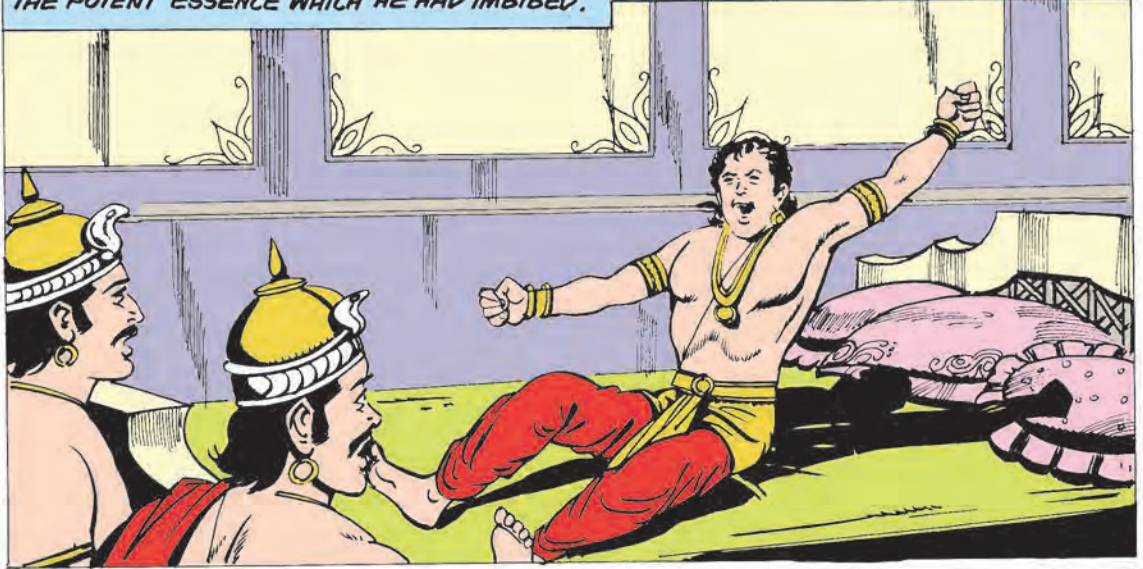
A LONG LIFE HAS
BEEN PREDICTED FOR
YOUR SONS. THEREFORE
BHEEMA WILL CERTAINLY
RETURN.



THE WISE VIDURA REASSURED
KUNTI THUS, AND RETURNED
HOME. BUT KUNTI WAS STILL
TORMENTED BY ANXIETY.



"MEANWHILE BHEEMA ROSE FROM HIS SLEEP ON THE EIGHTH DAY, ALL THE MIGHTIER FOR THE POTENT ESSENCE WHICH HE HAD IMBIBED."

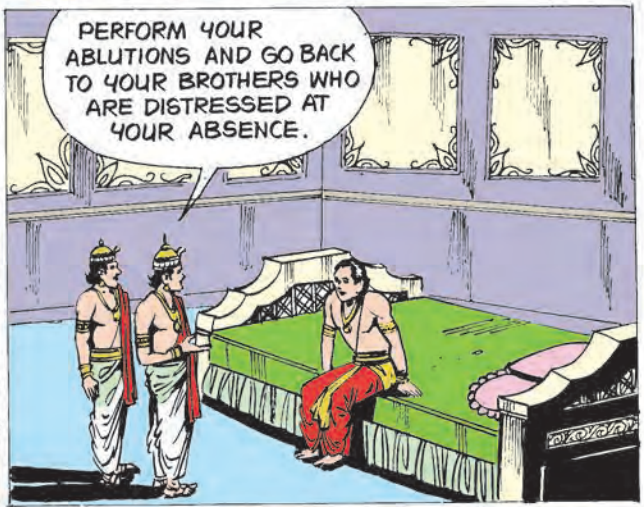


"AND THE NAGAS SAID TO HIM:

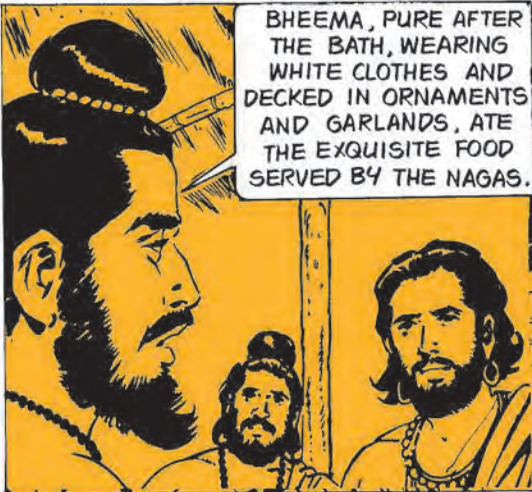
YOU HAVE ACQUIRED THE STRENGTH OF THOUSANDS OF ELEPHANTS. YOU WILL BE INVINCIBLE IN BATTLE.



PERFORM YOUR ABLUTIONS AND GO BACK TO YOUR BROTHERS WHO ARE DISTRESSED AT YOUR ABSENCE.



BHEEMA, PURE AFTER THE BATH, WEARING WHITE CLOTHES AND DECKED IN ORNAMENTS AND GARLANDS, ATE THE EXQUISITE FOOD SERVED BY THE NAGAS.



"THEN HE ACCEPTED AND RETURNED THE HOMAGE AND BENEDICTION OF THE NAGAS."



"THEN GUIDED BY THE NAGAS, HE ASCENDED THROUGH THE WATERS..."



"...AND REACHED THE VERY GARDENS WHERE HE HAD AMUSED HIMSELF."



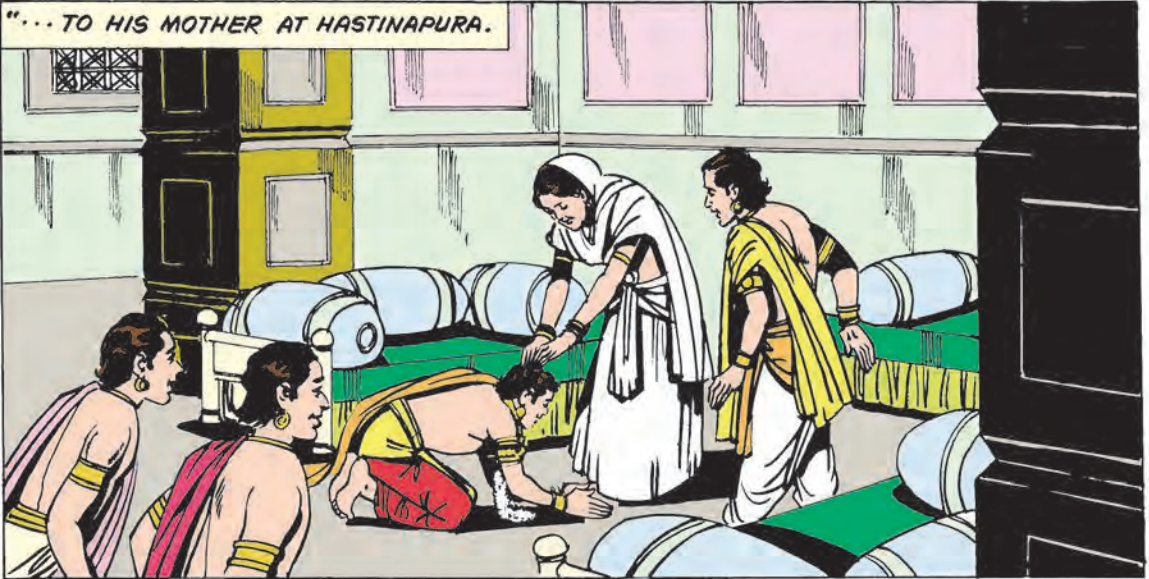
"AND THE NAGAS VANISHED FROM THE SCENE."



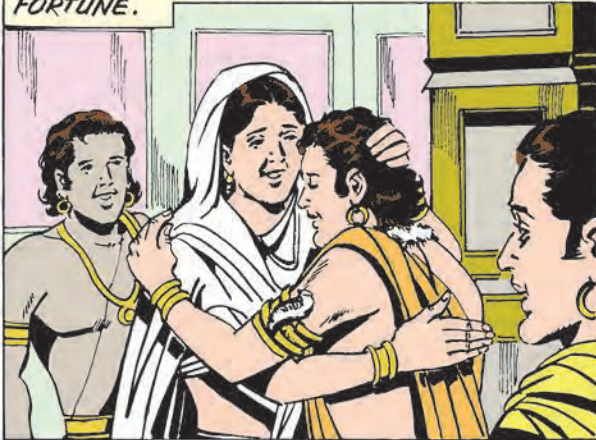
"THE MIGHTY BHEEMA THEN RAN IN HASTE..."



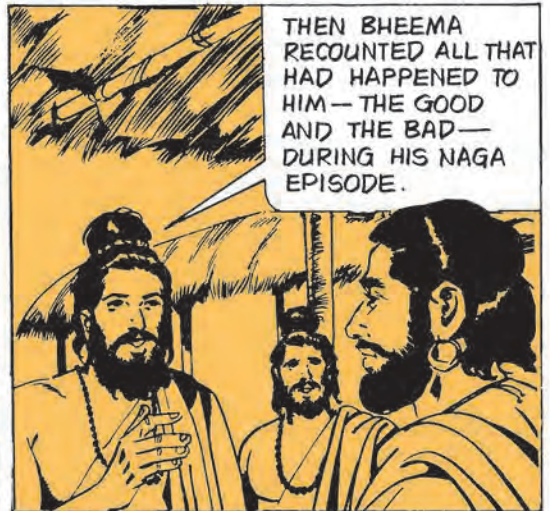
"... TO HIS MOTHER AT HASTINAPURA.



"MOVED BY THE CLOSE AFFECTION FOR EACH OTHER THE PANDAVAS HAILED THEIR GOOD FORTUNE.



THEN BHEEMA RECOUNTED ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM — THE GOOD AND THE BAD — DURING HIS NAGA EPISODE.



" THEN YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:

DO NOT SPEAK OF THIS INCIDENT TO ANYONE.



LET IT BE CONFINED TO OURSELVES.



THE PANDAVAS THENCEFORTH
LED A PRUDENT LIFE AND IN
THIS THEY WERE HELPED BY
ADVICE FROM VIDURA.

DURYODHANA PERSISTED IN PLOTTING
THE DEATH OF THE PANDAVAS BUT
HIS ATTEMPTS WERE FOILED BY
YUUYUTSU (DHRTIRASHTRA'S SON BY
A VAISHYA WOMAN) WHO IN HIS
LOVE FOR THE PANDAVAS CAUTIONED
THEM IN TIME.

MEANWHILE AS THE PRINCES
WERE WHILING AWAY THEIR
TIME IN IDLE PURSUITS, THEY
WERE PLACED UNDER THE
TUTELAGE OF GAUTAMA, WHOSE
BIRTH HAD OCCURRED IN A CLUMP
OF REED AND WHO WAS
ALSO KNOWN AS KRIPA.

AND THUS ENDS THE FOURTH SESSION
OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S
NARRATION OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL
ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.

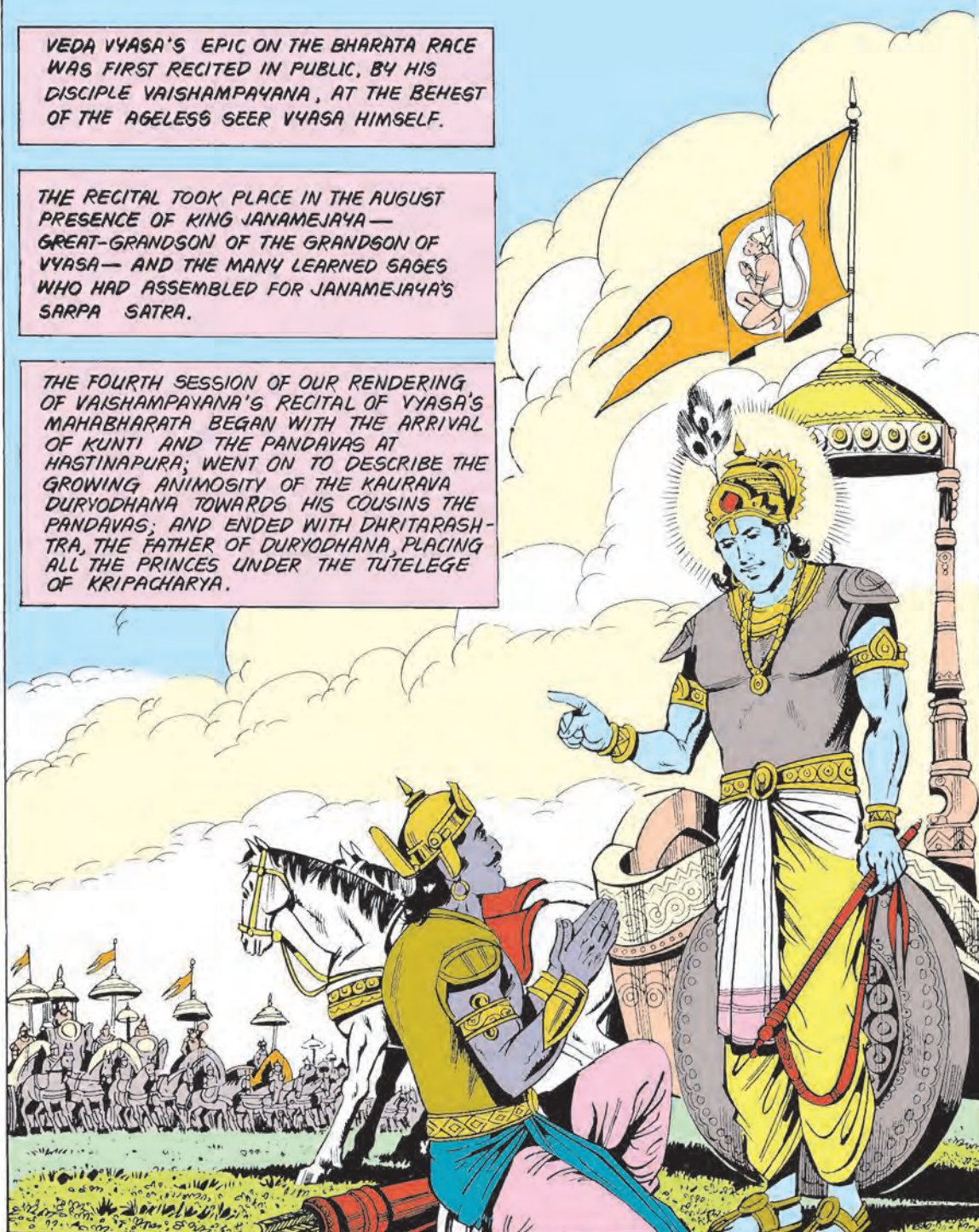
MAHABHARATA-5

Enter Drona

VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC, BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA, AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

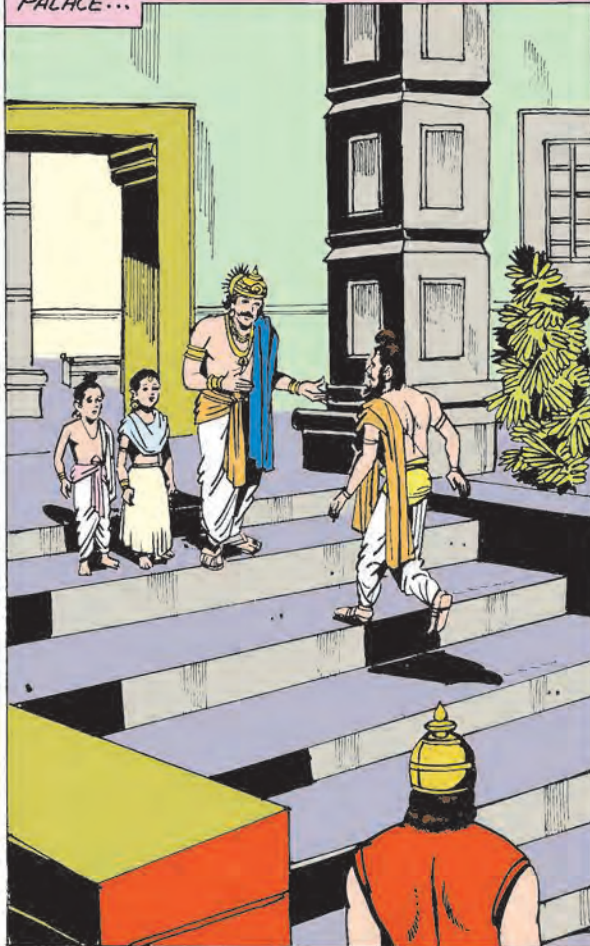
THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA — GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA — AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA.

THE FOURTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA BEGAN WITH THE ARRIVAL OF KUNTI AND THE PANDAVAS AT HASTINAPURA; WENT ON TO DESCRIBE THE GROWING ANIMOSITY OF THE KAURAVA DURYODHANA TOWARDS HIS COUSINS THE PANDAVAS; AND ENDED WITH DHRTIRASHTRA, THE FATHER OF DURYODHANA, PLACING ALL THE PRINCES UNDER THE TUTELEGE OF KRIPACHARYA.

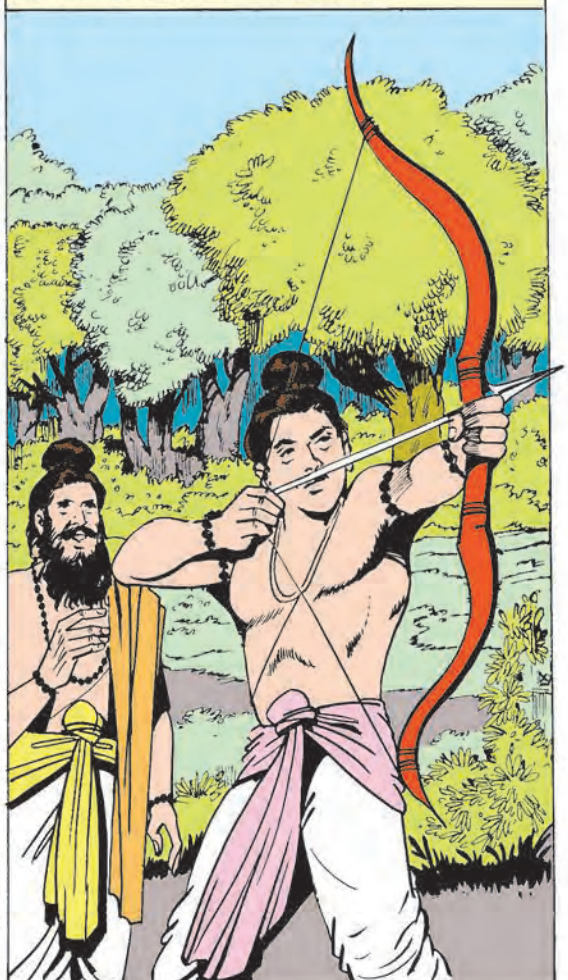




"AND LATER WHEN SHARADWAN, AN EXCELLENT WIELDER OF WEAPONS HIMSELF, LEARNT WHERE THE TWINS WERE, HE CAME TO SHANTANU'S PALACE..."



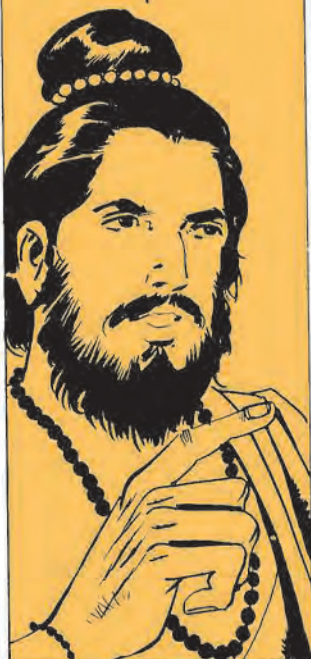
"... AND BECAME KRIPA'S INSTRUCTOR IN THE SCIENCE OF WEAPONS.



"KRIPA MASTERED THE SKILLS AND IN TIME TAUGHT THEM TO THE KAURAVAS, THE PANDAVAS, THE YADAVAS AND MANY OTHER PRINCES WHO CAME THERE FROM OTHER KINGDOMS."



BUT BHEESHMA, WHO WANTED ONLY THE BEST OF WARRIORS AS GURU FOR HIS GRAND-SONS, APPOINTED DRONA AS THEIR INSTRUCTOR.

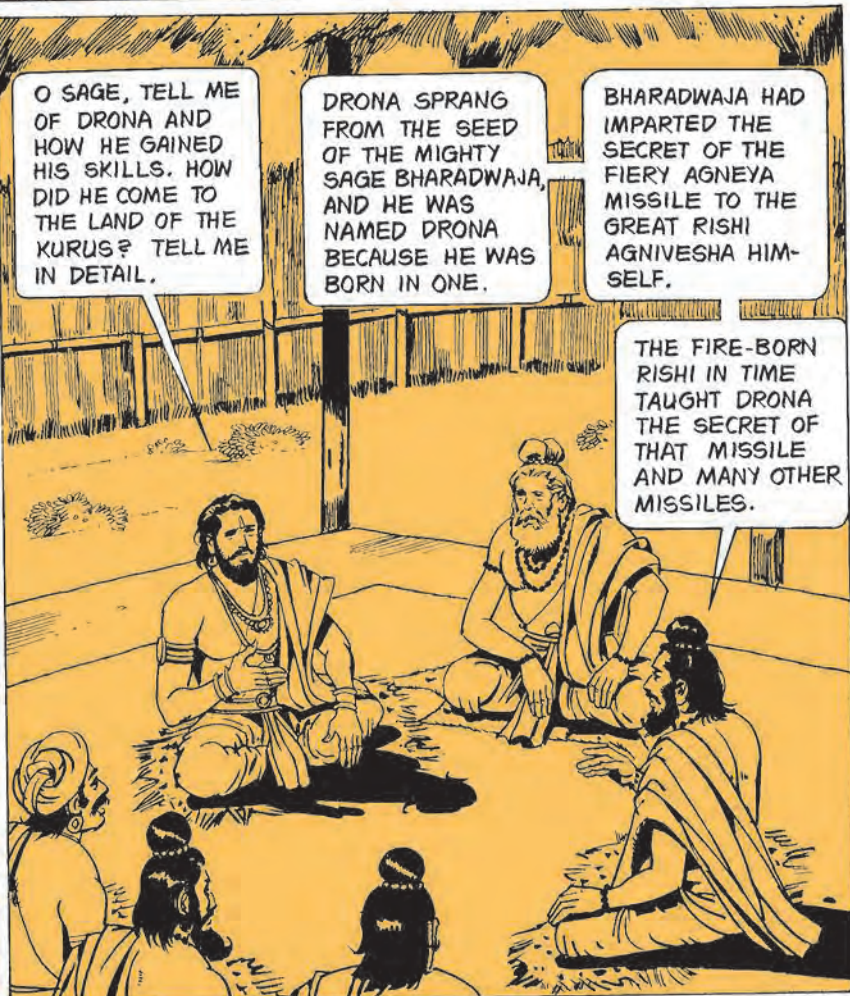


O SAGE, TELL ME OF DRONA AND HOW HE GAINED HIS SKILLS. HOW DID HE COME TO THE LAND OF THE KURUS? TELL ME IN DETAIL.

DRONA SPRANG FROM THE SEED OF THE MIGHTY SAGE BHARADWAJA, AND HE WAS NAMED DRONA BECAUSE HE WAS BORN IN ONE.

BHARADWAJA HAD IMPARTED THE SECRET OF THE FIERY AGNEYA MISSILE TO THE GREAT RISHI AGNIVESHA HIMSELF.

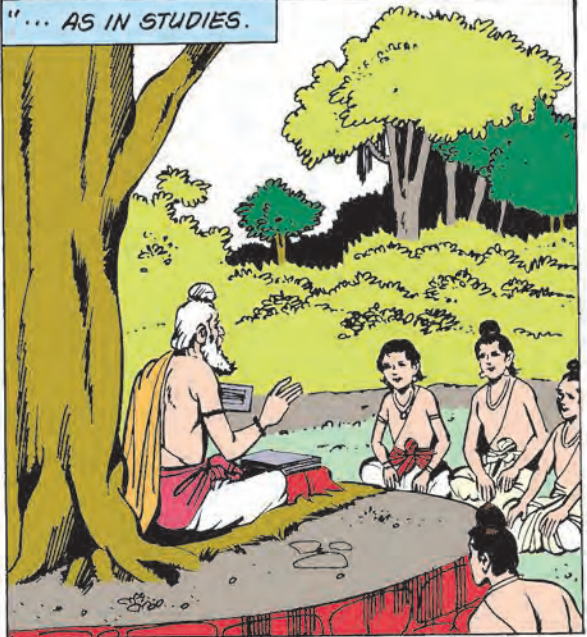
THE FIRE-BORN RISHI IN TIME TAUGHT DRONA THE SECRET OF THAT MISSILE AND MANY OTHER MISSILES.



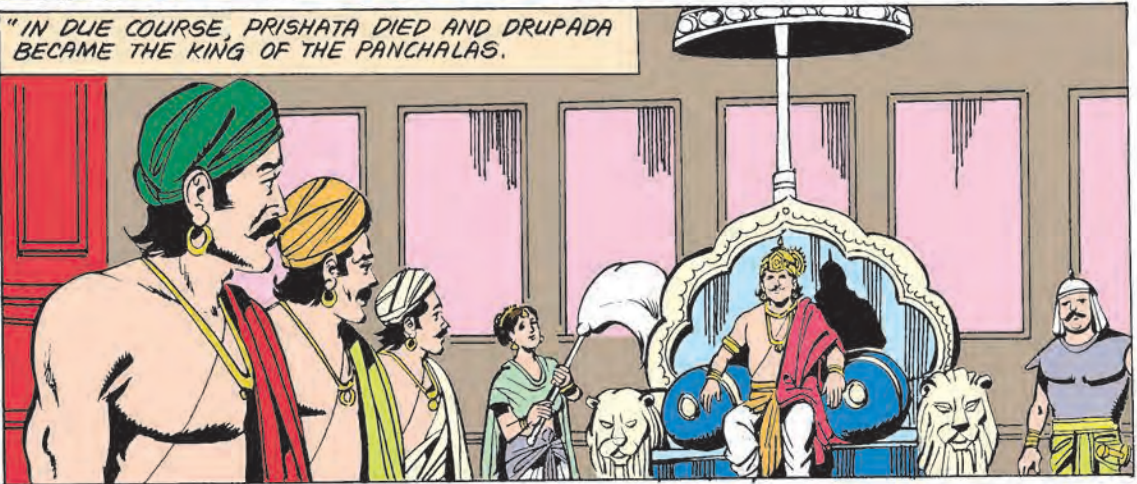
"MEANWHILE PRISHATA, THE KING OF NORTHERN PANCHALA AND A FRIEND OF BHARADWAJA, SENT HIS SON, DRUPADA, TO THE SAGE. THE BOY BECAME DRONA'S COMPANION IN PLAY...



"... AS IN STUDIES.



"IN DUE COURSE, PRISHATA DIED AND DRUPADA BECAME THE KING OF THE PANCHALAS.



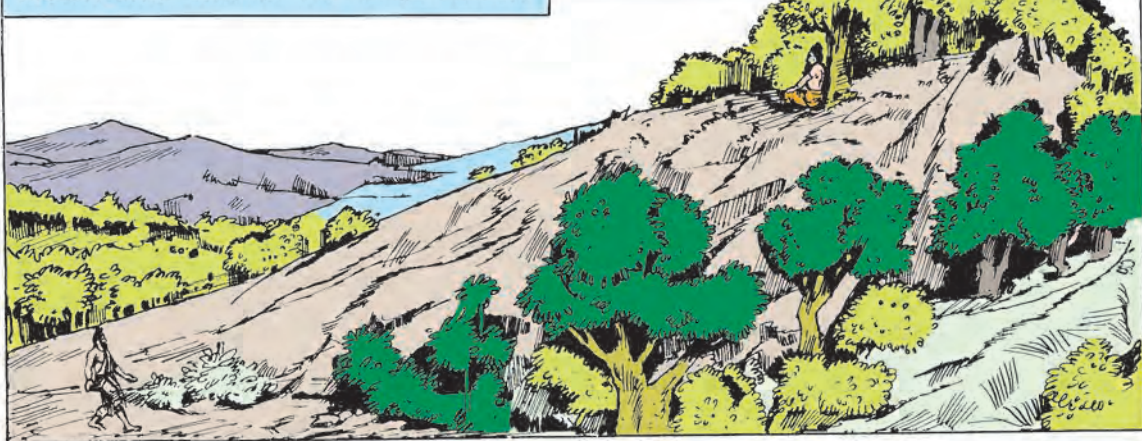
"AROUND THE SAME TIME, BHARADWAJA TOO DIED; AND DRONA, NOW A FLAWLESS SCHOLAR OF THE VEDAS, MARRIED KRIPI, THE DAUGHTER OF SHARADWAN AND THE SISTER OF KRIPI.



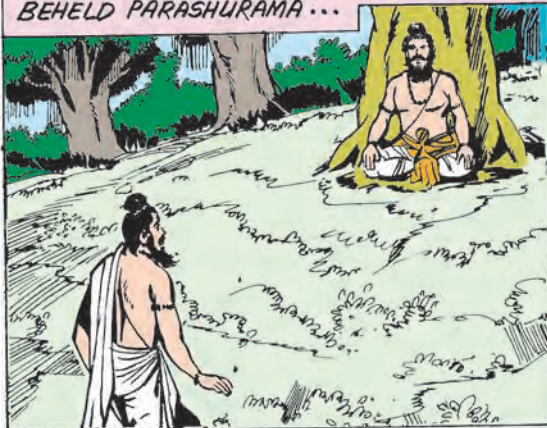
"IN TIME, A SON WAS BORN TO THEM AND THE MOMENT HE WAS BORN, HE NEIGHED LIKE THE CELESTIAL STEED UCHCHAISHRAVAS. AND AS HIS CRY ROSE TO THE SKIES, A VOICE FROM THE REALMS ABOVE SAID:

THIS CHILD
SHALL BE KNOWN
BY THE NAME OF
ASHWATTHAMA.

"THEN, O MONARCH, DRONA LEARNT THAT PARASHURAMA, THE SON OF JAMADAGNI, SUPREME IN LEARNING AS IN WARFARE, AND THE SCOURGE OF HIS ENEMIES, WAS GIVING AWAY HIS ACQUISITIONS TO DESERVING BRAHMANAS. MOVED BY HOPE AND AMBITION, DRONA SET OUT FOR THE MAHENDRA MOUNTAINS WHERE THE SAGE DWELT.



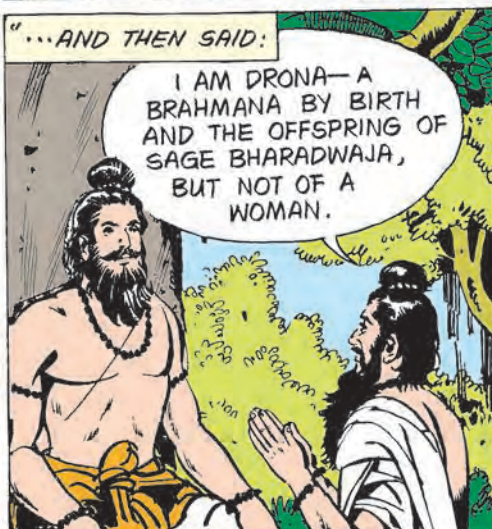
"AND WHEN HE ARRIVED THERE AND BEHELD PARASHURAMA...



"...HE FIRST PROSTRATED HIMSELF BEFORE THE SAGE...

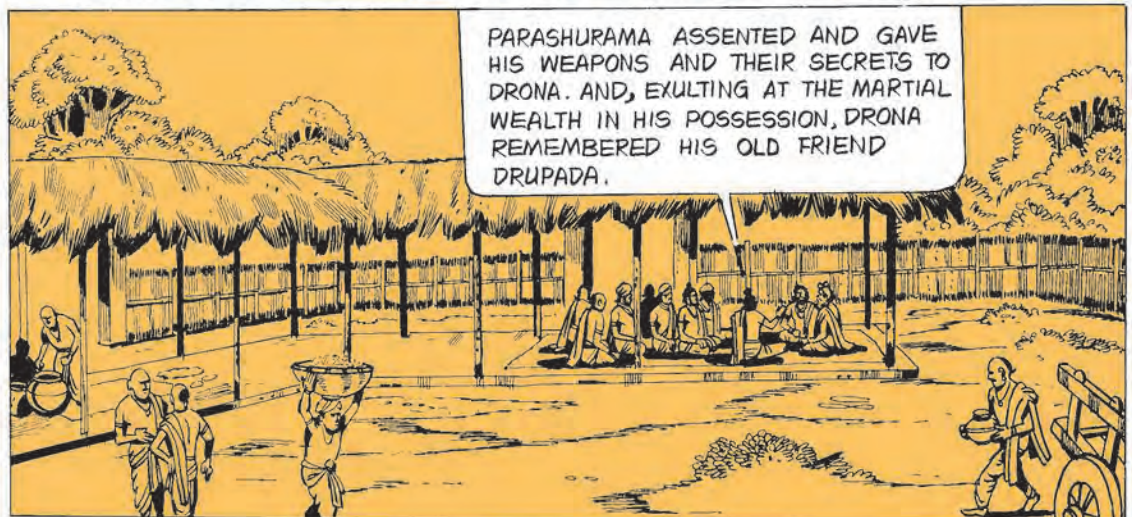
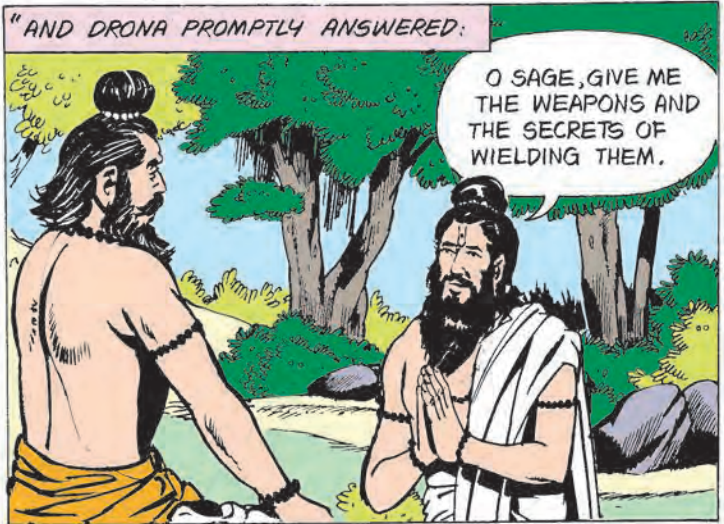
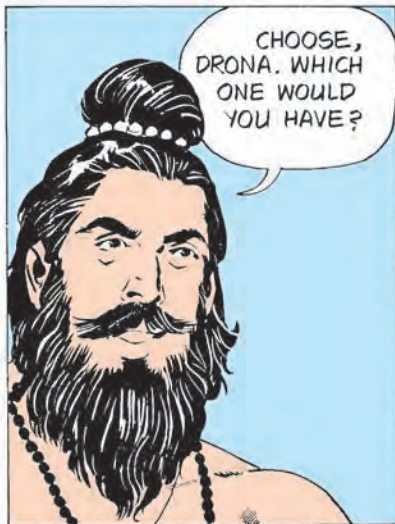
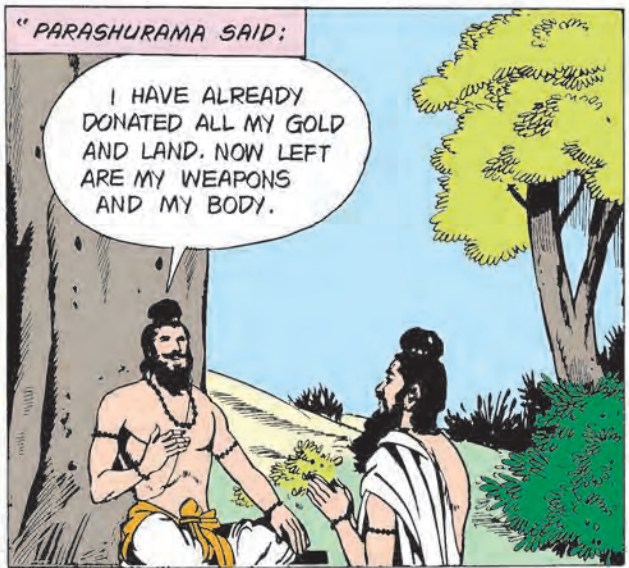


"...AND THEN SAID:

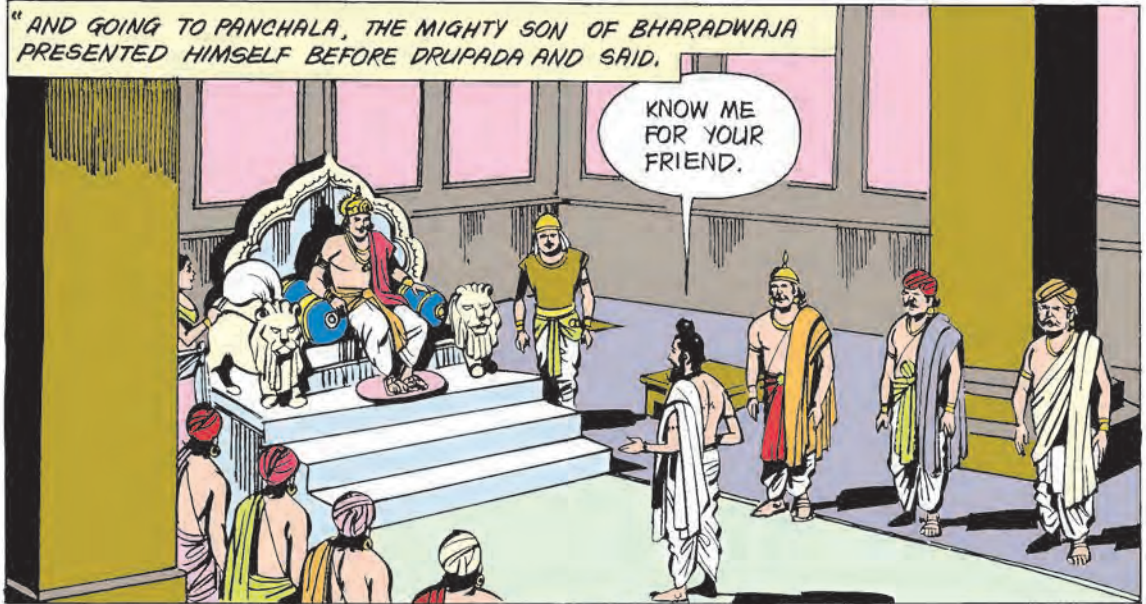


"ON HEARING HIS WORDS THE SAGE ASKED:

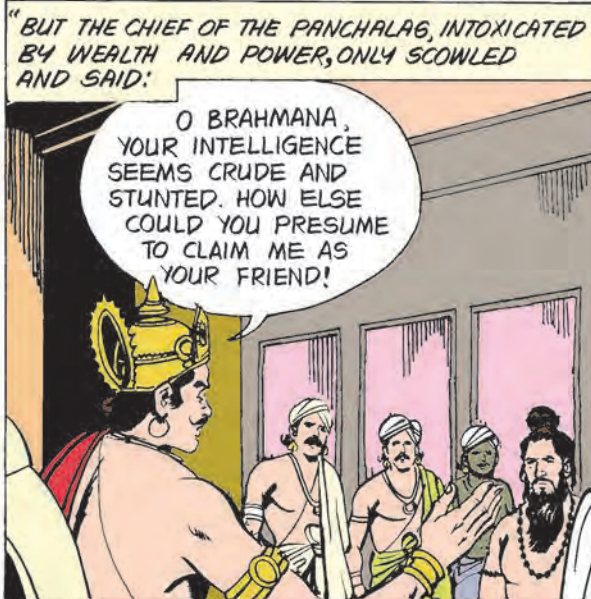




"AND GOING TO PANCHALA, THE MIGHTY SON OF BHARADWAJA PRESENTED HIMSELF BEFORE DRUPADA AND SAID,



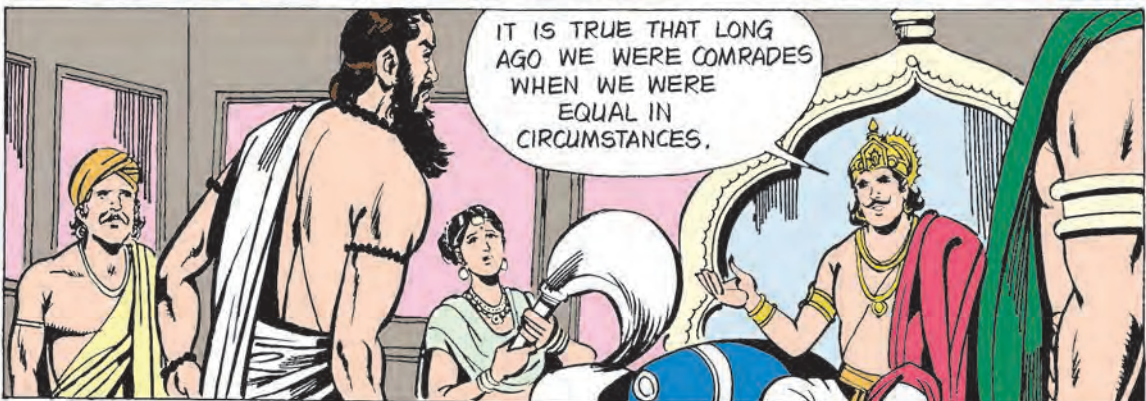
"BUT THE CHIEF OF THE PANCHALAS, INTOXICATED BY WEALTH AND POWER, ONLY SCOWLED AND SAID:

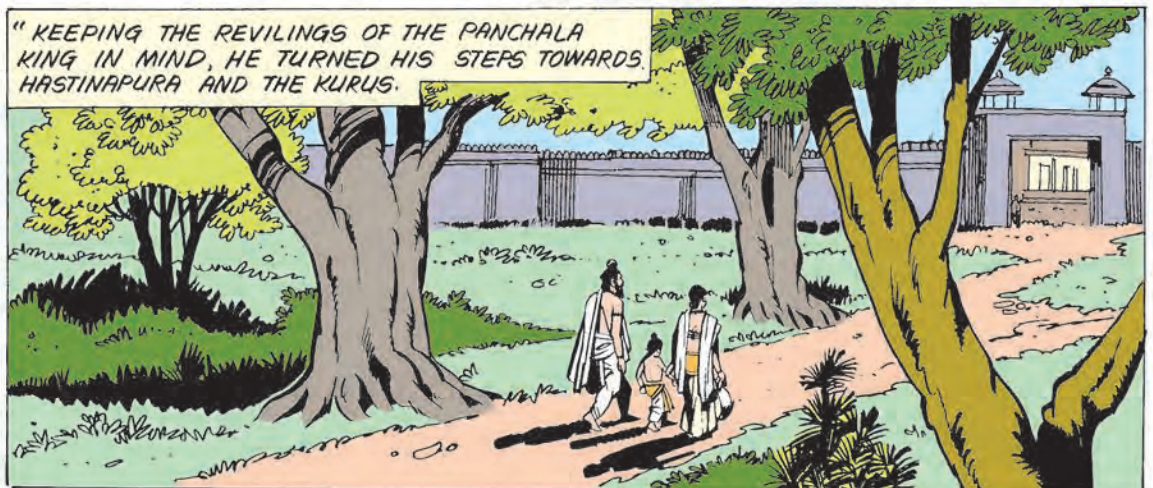
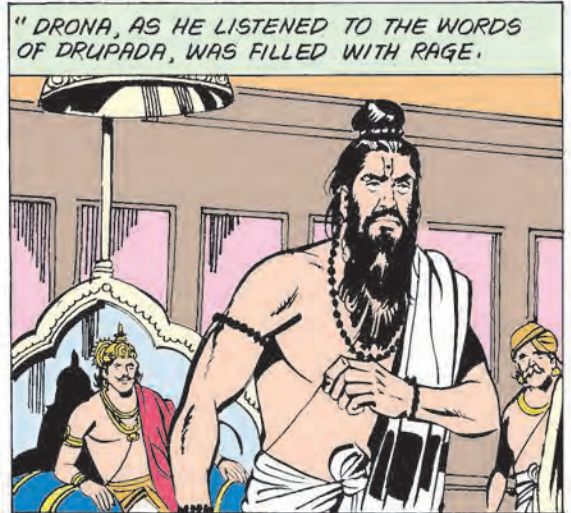
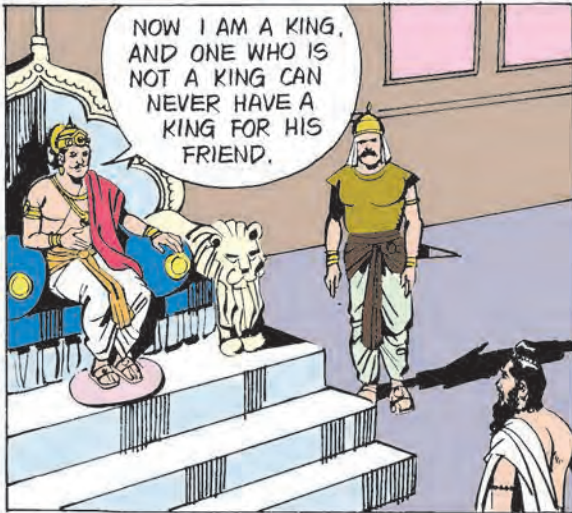
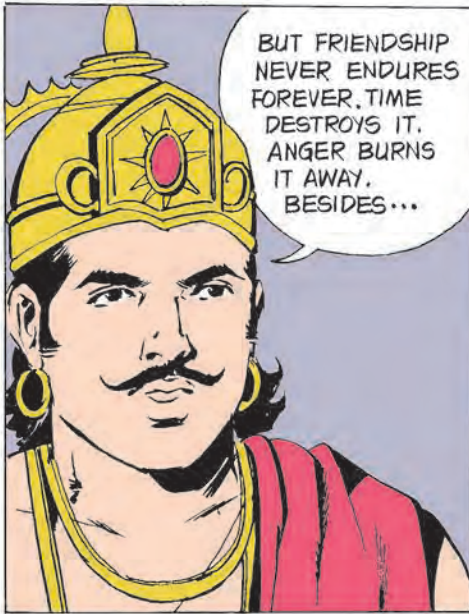


YOU ARE DIM-WITTED NOT TO KNOW THAT GREAT KINGS CAN NEVER BE FRIENDS WITH LUCKLESS, INDIGENT MEN LIKE YOU.



IT IS TRUE THAT LONG AGO WE WERE COMRADES WHEN WE WERE EQUAL IN CIRCUMSTANCES.

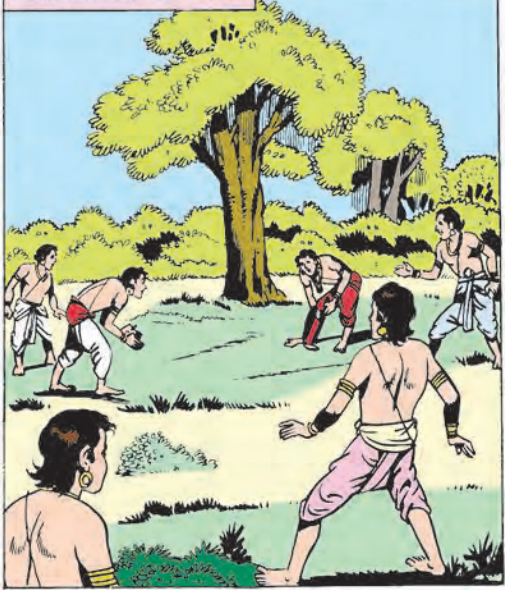




"AT HASTINAPURA, DRONA WITH KRIPI AND ASHWATTHAMA, LIVED UNKNOWN AND UNANNOUNCED FOR MANY YEARS IN THE HOUSE OF KRIPA, HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW.



"AND THEN, ONE DAY, THE PRINCES OF HASTINAPURA CAME OUT OF THE CITY TO PLAY VITA-DANDA.



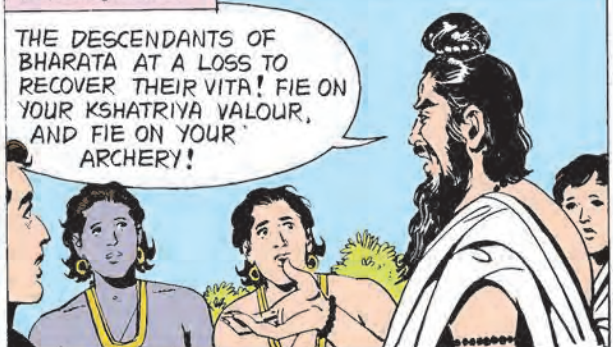
"WHILE THEY WERE PLAYING, THE VITA FELL INTO A DEEP DRY WELL.



"THEY WERE UNABLE TO RETRIEVE IT AND LOOKED ABOUT, SHAMEFACED AND HELPLESS, WHEN THEY SPOTTED A BRAHMANA.



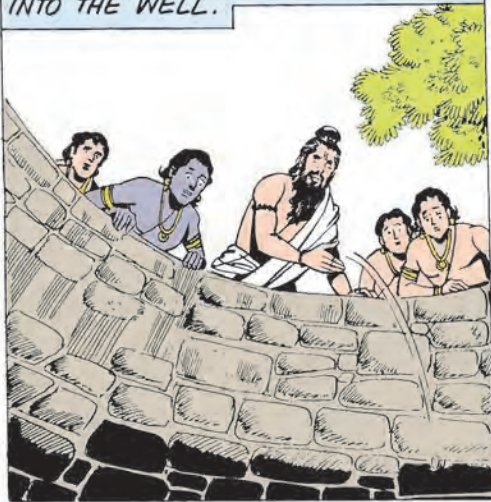
"THEY IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDED HIM AND THE BRAHMANA, WHO WAS NONE OTHER THAN DRONA, SAID:



THE DESCENDANTS OF BHARATA AT A LOSS TO RECOVER THEIR VITA! FIE ON YOUR KSHATRIYA VALOUR, AND FIE ON YOUR ARCHERY!



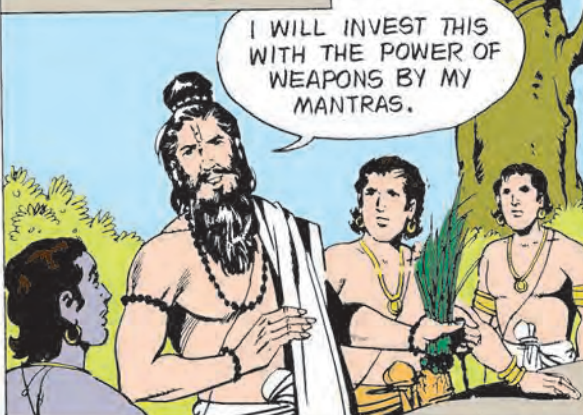
"AND DRONA THREW HIS RING DOWN INTO THE WELL.

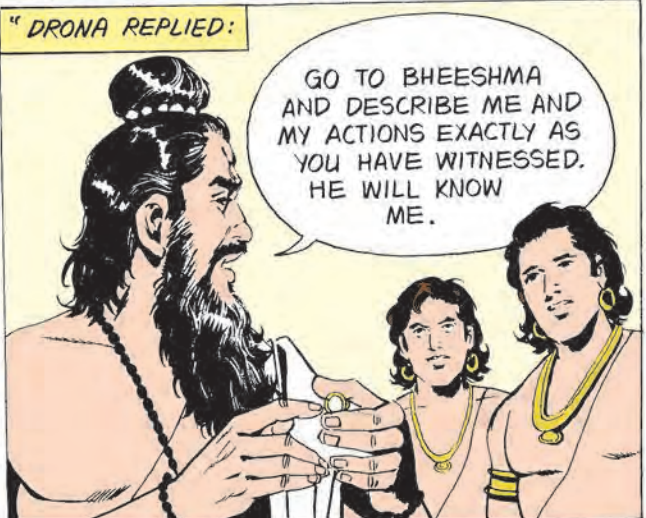
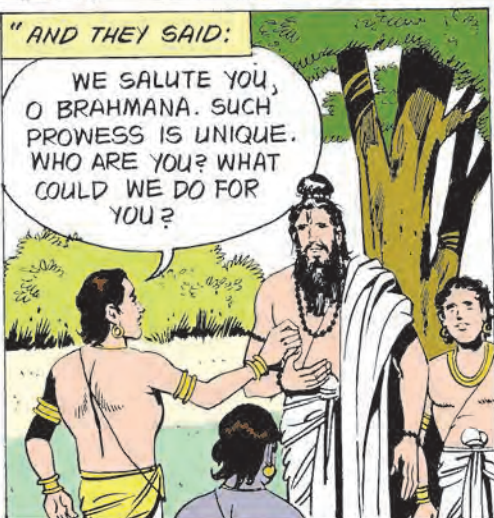
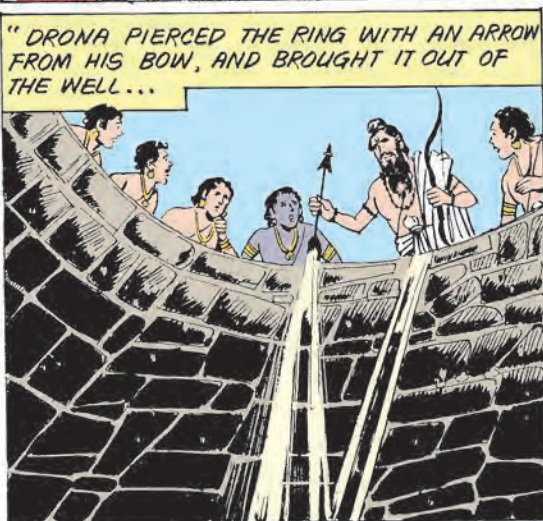
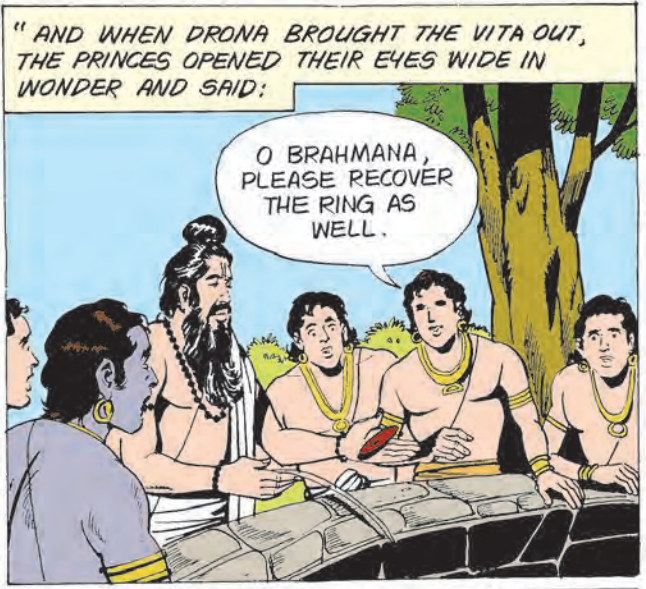


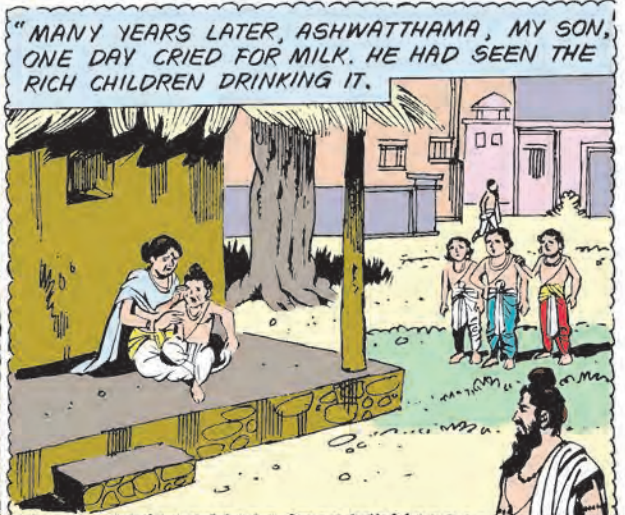
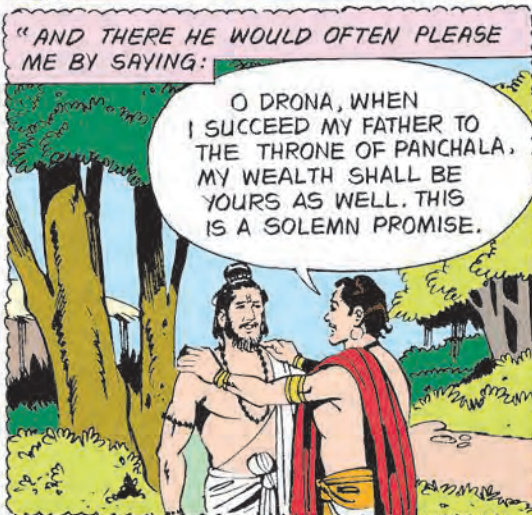
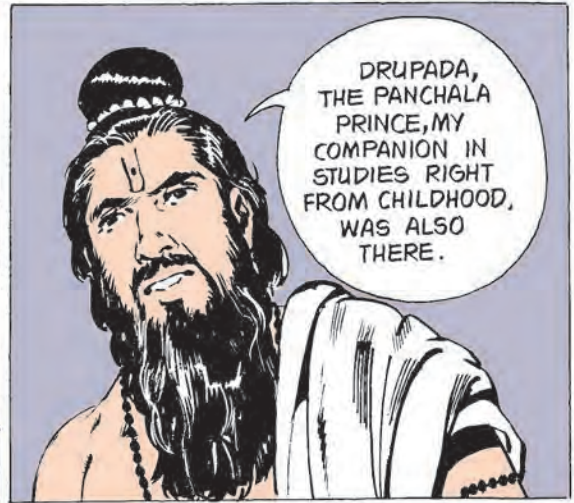
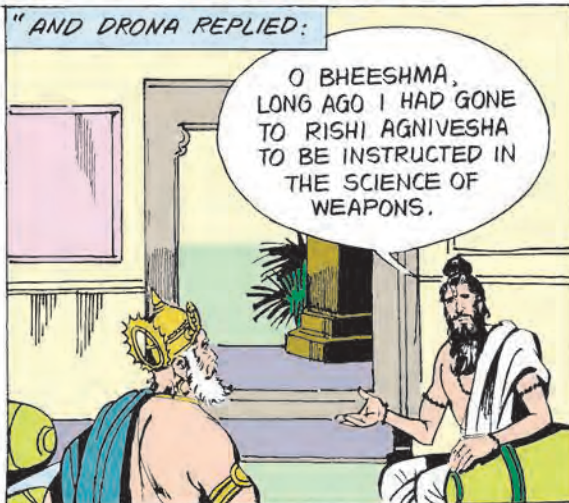
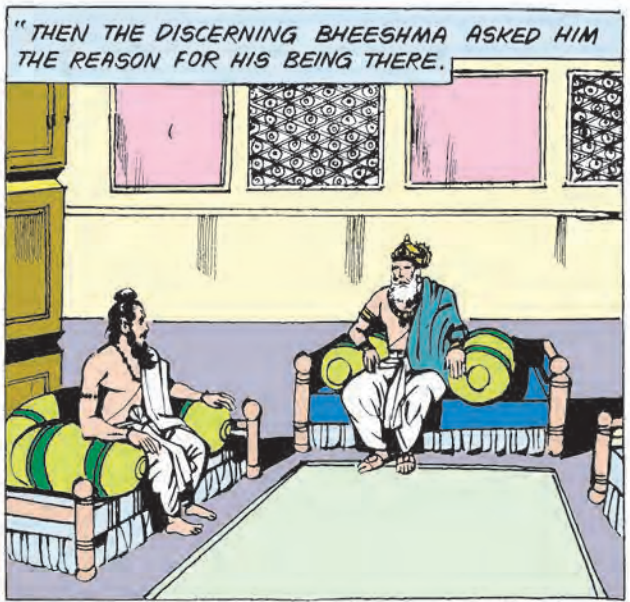
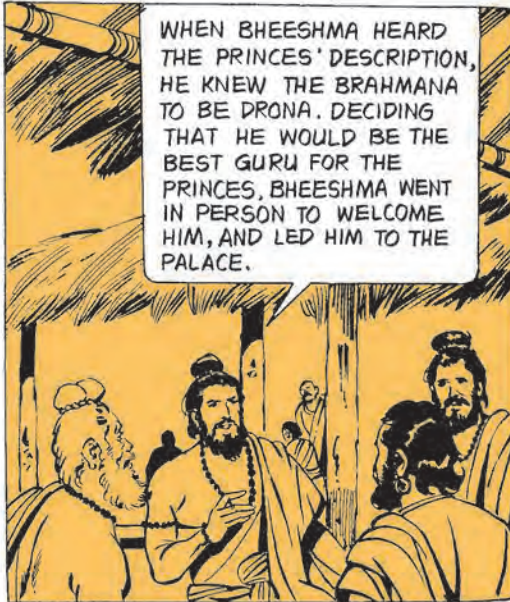
" THEN YUDHISHTHIRA THE ELDEST PANDAVA SAID:



" DRONA ONLY SMILED AND, UPROOTING A CLUMP OF REED, SAID:







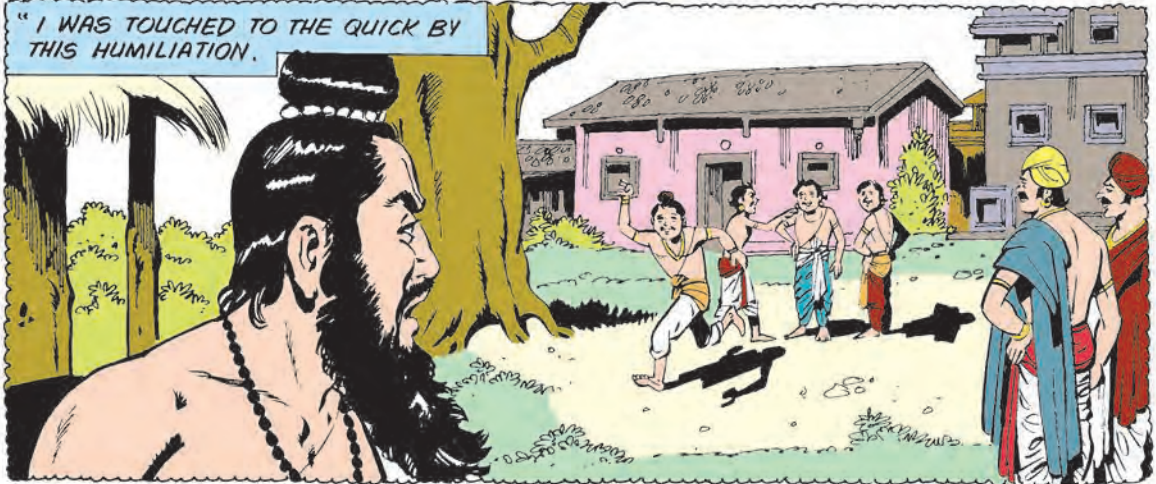
"SOME OF HIS PLAYMATES TEMPTED MY SON INTO DRINKING A MIXTURE OF RICE FLOUR AND WATER.



"FOOLED INTO BELIEVING THAT HE DRANK MILK, THE BOY IN ALL CHILDISH INNOCENCE DANCED JOYFULLY CRYING:

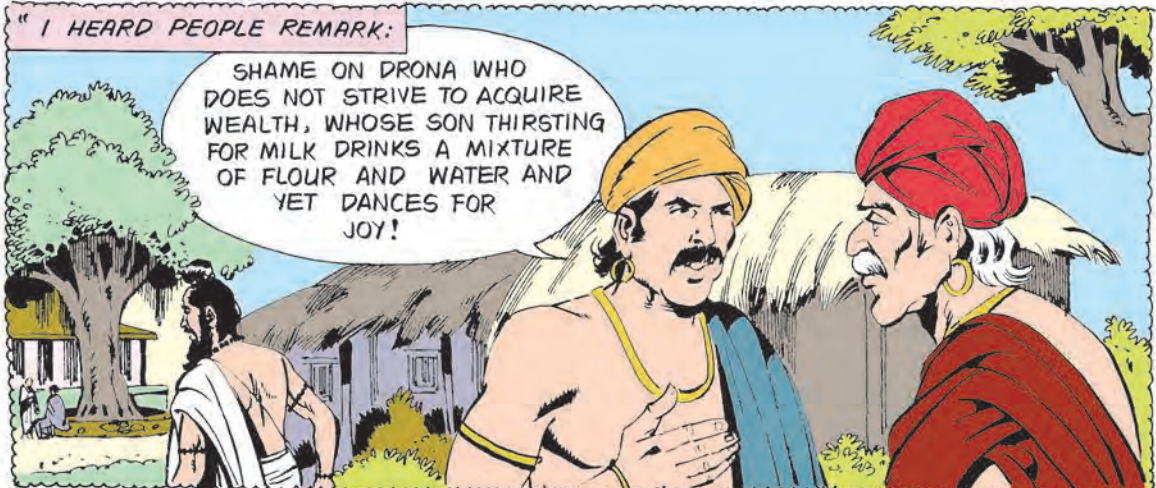


"I WAS TOUCHED TO THE QUICK BY THIS HUMILIATION.

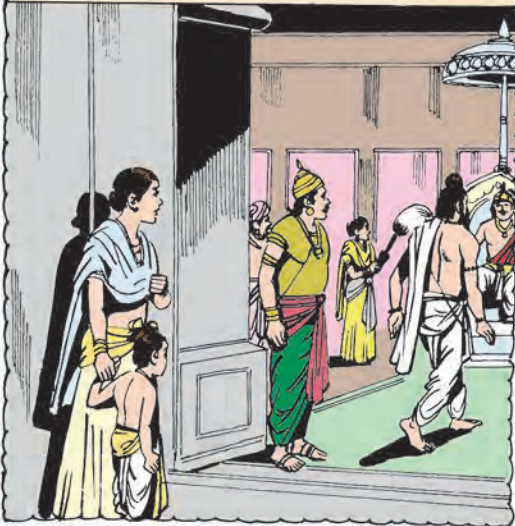


"I HEARD PEOPLE REMARK:

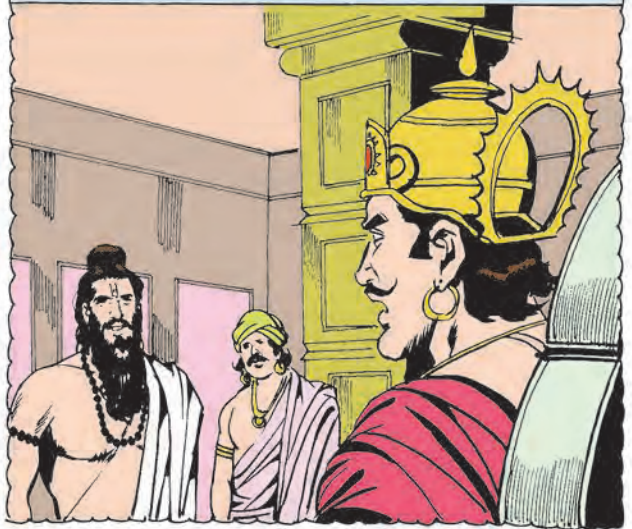
SHAME ON DRONA WHO DOES NOT STRIVE TO ACQUIRE WEALTH, WHOSE SON THIRSTING FOR MILK DRINKS A MIXTURE OF FLOUR AND WATER AND YET DANCES FOR JOY!



"I WAS BESIDE MYSELF, O BHEESHMA SO I TOOK MY WIFE AND WENT FULL OF HOPE TO THE KING OF THE PANCHALAS.



"REMEMBERING OUR FRIENDSHIP AND HIS SWEETLY-SPOKEN PROMISES, I WENT TO HIM WITH THE CONFIDENCE OF A FRIEND.



"BUT DRUPADA CAST ME OFF WITH A SCORNFUL LAUGH AS IF I WERE A LOWLY BEGGAR.

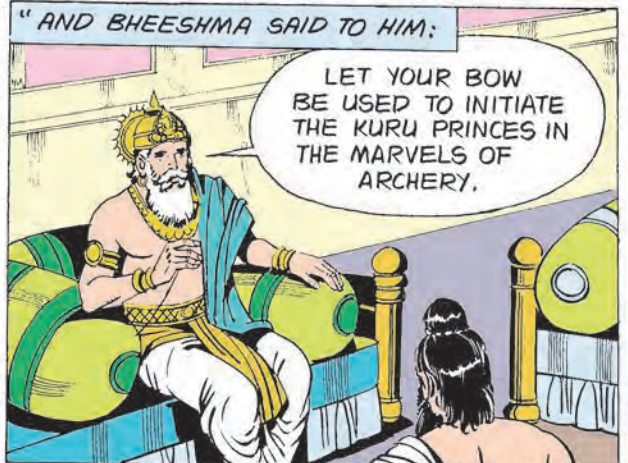


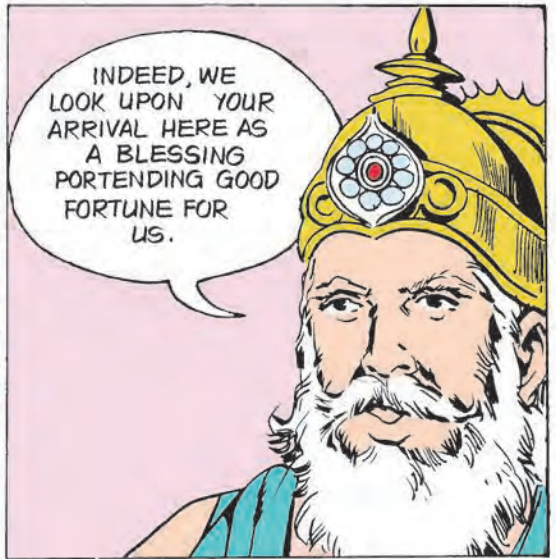
I WALKED OUT AND HAVE NOW COME TO THE KURUS TO OBTAIN VIRTUOUS DISCIPLES. I AWAIT YOUR COMMAND.



"AND BHEESHMA SAID TO HIM:

LET YOUR BOW BE USED TO INITIATE THE KURU PRINCES IN THE MARVELS OF ARCHERY.





"AND BHEESHMA GAVE DRONA A HOUSE PROVIDED WITH ALL COMFORTS AND FILLED WITH GRAINS AND OTHER WEALTH.

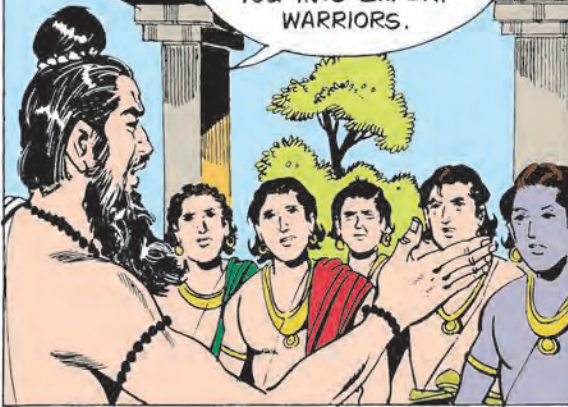


"AND THEN HE ENTRUSTED HIS GRAND-SONS TO DRONA, ALONG WITH RICH GIFTS.



"DRONA JOYFULLY ACCEPTED THE PRINCES AND THEN SAID TO THEM:

I HAVE A PARTICULAR AIM. PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH IT WHEN I TRANSFORM YOU INTO EXPERT WARRIORS.



"WHILE THE OTHER KURU PRINCES REMAINED SILENT, ARJUNA PROMISED TO ACCOMPLISH IT, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT IT WAS. AND DRONA CLASPED HIM TO HIS BOSOM AND SHED TEARS OF JOY.



THEN THE VALOROUS DRONA IMPARTED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF WEAPONS, BOTH WORLDLY AND OCCULT, TO THE PANDAVAS. AND ALONG WITH THE PRINCES OF THE NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS, KARNA THE FOSTER-SON OF THE CHARIOTEER ALSO CAME TO HIM.

AND, O MONARCH, WHEN ALL THE DISCIPLES WERE GIVEN WATERPOTS FOR PROCURING DRINKING WATER, ASHWATTHAMA WAS GIVEN A POT WITH A WIDER MOUTH, TO ENABLE HIM TO FILL IT FAST AND RETURN EARLY. AND IN THAT PERIOD DRONA WOULD IMPART SPECIAL SKILLS TO HIS SON.

ARJUNA KNEW THIS. SO, TO KEEP ABREAST OF THE SON OF HIS GURU, HE WOULD INVOKE THE VARUNA MISSILE TO FILL HIS POT, AND WOULD RETURN AT THE SAME TIME AS ASHWATTHAMA.

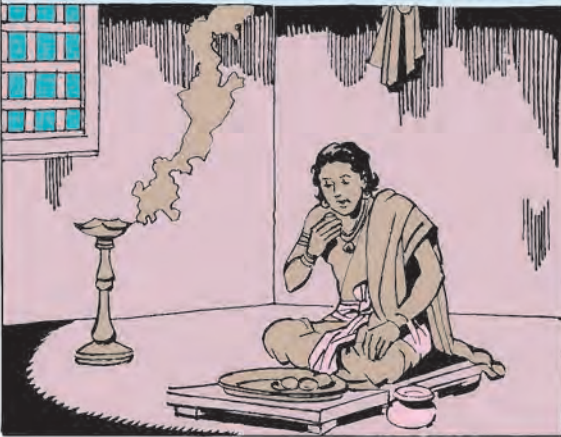


"AND BEHOLDING THIS STEADFAST DEVOTION OF ARJUNA TO ARCHERY, DRONA SUMMONED THE COOK AND TOLD HIM:

DON'T EVER GIVE ARJUNA HIS FOOD IN THE DARK. AND DON'T TELL HIM THAT I HAVE TOLD YOU THIS.



"A FEW DAYS LATER, IT SO HAPPENED THAT WHILE ARJUNA WAS AT HIS DINNER, A WIND AROSE AND PUT OUT THE LAMP."



"BUT ARJUNA CONTINUED TO EAT, HIS HAND REACHING HIS MOUTH BY FORCE OF HABIT."



"AND REALIZING SUDDENLY THE POTENTIAL OF HABITS..."



"...ARJUNA STARTED PRACTISING WITH HIS BOW IN THE DARK. DRONA HEARD THE TWANG OF THE BOW-STRING AT NIGHT AND GOING UP TO ARJUNA..."



"...CLASPED HIM IN AFFECTION AND SAID:

MARK MY WORDS, I SHALL MAKE YOU UNEQUALLED AMONG THOSE WHO WIELD THE BOW.



THUS STARTED THE LESSONS FOR ARJUNA, IN COMBATS AND FIGHTS ON THE GROUND OR ASTRIDE ANIMALS OR RIDING A CHARIOT, WITH WEAPONS AS DIVERSE AS THE MACE, THE SPEAR, THE SWORD AND THE DART.

AND AS FAME OF ARJUNA'S PROWESS SPREAD, MANY FROM FAR AND NEAR FLOCKED TO DRONA TO BE INSTRUCTED. ONE AMONG THEM WAS EKALAVYA, THE SON OF A NISHADA KING.



DRONA, HOWEVER, IN DEFERENCE TO THE STATUS OF THE KURU PRINCES AND AWARE OF THE RULES OF RIGHT CONDUCT, DID NOT ACCEPT HIM AS HIS PUPIL.

BUT EKLAVYA PAID HOMAGE TO DRONA BY TOUCHING THE GURU'S FEET WITH HIS HEAD...



"...AND THEN WENDED HIS WAY INTO THE FOREST. THERE HE MADE A CLAY IMAGE OF DRONA..."



"...WORSHIPPED IT AS IF IT WERE HIS GURU..."



"...AND PRACTISED ARCHERY BEFORE IT WITH UNSWERVING DILIGENCE AND INTENSE DEVOTION."



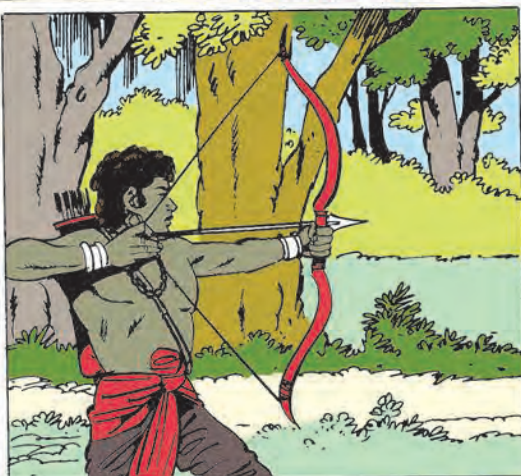
AND BEFORE LONG, BECAUSE OF HIS EXCEPTIONAL REVERENCE FOR HIS GURU AND HIS DEVOTION TO HIS GOAL, HE EXCELLED IN ALL THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ARCHERY.



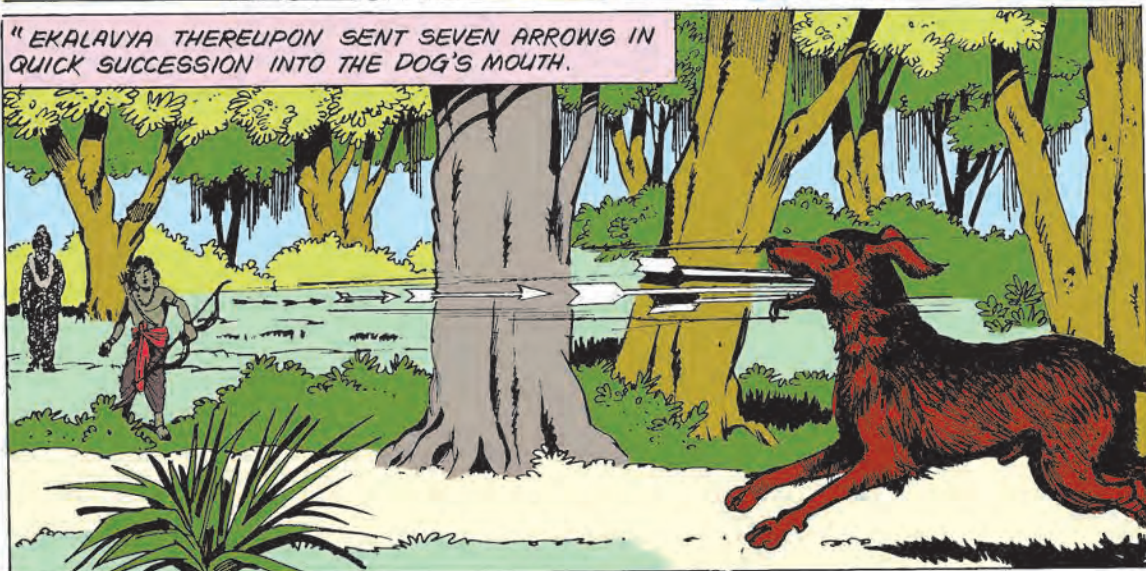
"THEN ONE DAY, THE KURU PRINCES CAME TO THAT FOREST ON A HUNT FOLLOWED BY THEIR ATTENDANTS AND A DOG."



"THE DOG, STRAYING FROM THE GROUP, CAME UPON EKALAVYA AND BEGAN TO BARK LOUDLY."



"EKALAVYA THEREUPON SENT SEVEN ARROWS IN QUICK SUCCESSION INTO THE DOG'S MOUTH."



"THE GAPING DOG WENT RUNNING TOWARDS THE PANDAVAS, FILLED WITH WONDER..."



"...THOSE PRINCES SCANNED THE FOREST FOR THE ONE WHO POSSESSED SUCH SKILL."



"AND THEY SOON FOUND THE WOODSMAN AT HIS CEASELESS PRACTICE."



"THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE MAN OF UNKEMPT LOOKS AND ASKED HIM:"

WHO ARE YOU?

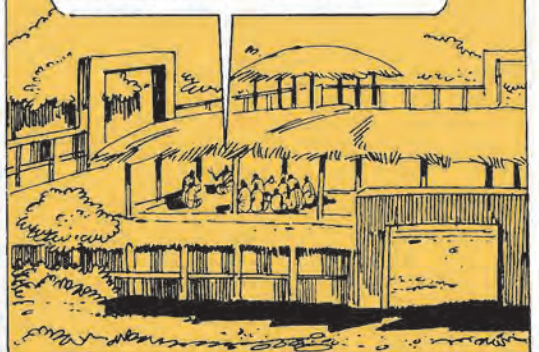


HE REPLIED:

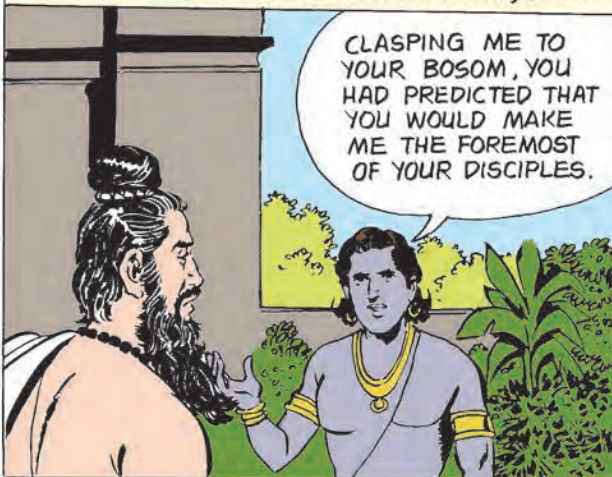
O VALIANT MEN, I AM THE SON OF HIRANYADHANUSH, KING OF THE NISHADAS. I AM ALSO A PUPIL OF DRONA, PERFECTING THE ART OF ARCHERY.



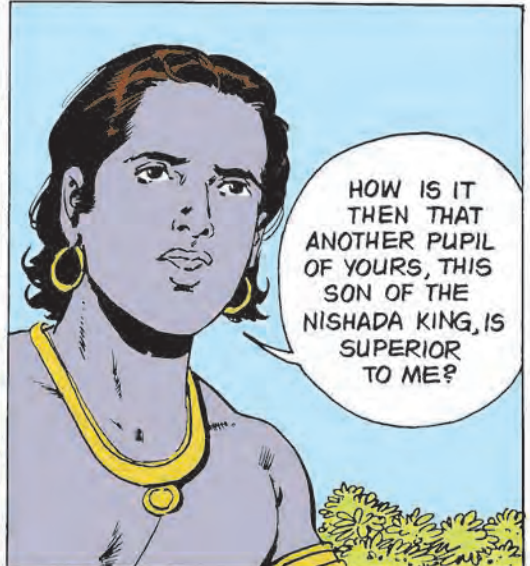
THE PANDAVAS LEARNT ALL ABOUT HIM AND, RETURNING HOME, NARRATED TO DRONA THE UNEXPECTED TURN OF EVENTS IN THE FOREST.



"ARJUNA PONDERED FOR LONG OVER EKALAVYA'S SKILL AND THEN, IN A PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH HIS WELL-LOVED GURU, SAID:



CLASPING ME TO YOUR BOSOM, YOU HAD PREDICTED THAT YOU WOULD MAKE ME THE FOREMOST OF YOUR DISCIPLES.



HOW IS IT THEN THAT ANOTHER PUPIL OF YOURS, THIS SON OF THE NISHADA KING, IS SUPERIOR TO ME?

"DRONA REFLECTED FOR SOME TIME AND, IN A RESOLUTE MOVE, WENT TO THE NISHADA PRINCE TAKING ARJUNA WITH HIM. AND THERE HE SAW EKALAVYA OF UNKEMPT APPEARANCE AND DETERMINED WILL.



"AS SOON AS EKALAVYA SAW HIS GURU, HE WENT FORWARD AND PROSTRATED HIMSELF AT HIS FEET.



"THEN JOINING HIS HANDS IN REVERENCE HE STOOD BEFORE HIM. AND DRONA SAID:



O BRAVE ONE, IF YOU REALLY ARE MY PUPIL, GIVE ME MY GURU-DAKSHINA.

"GRATIFIED AT THESE WORDS, EKALAVYA SAID IN REPLY:

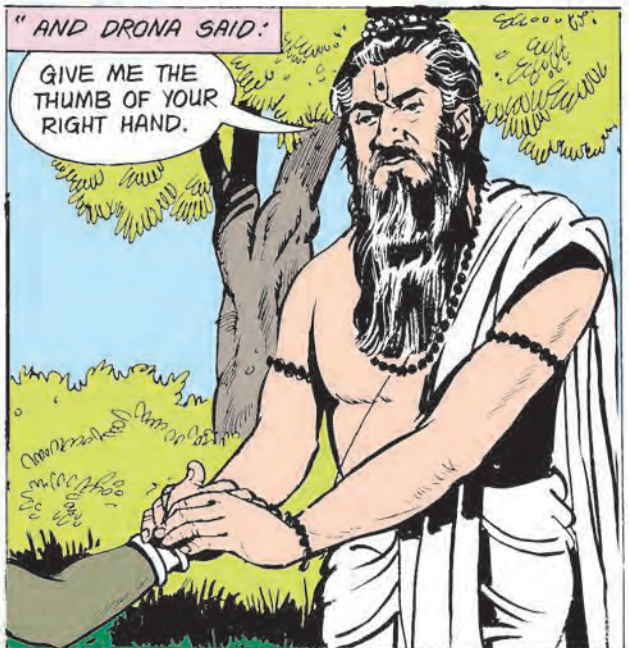
O WISE PRECEPTOR,
I HAVE NOTHING WITH
ME WHICH IS NOT FOR
MY GREAT GURU.



COMMAND
ME.

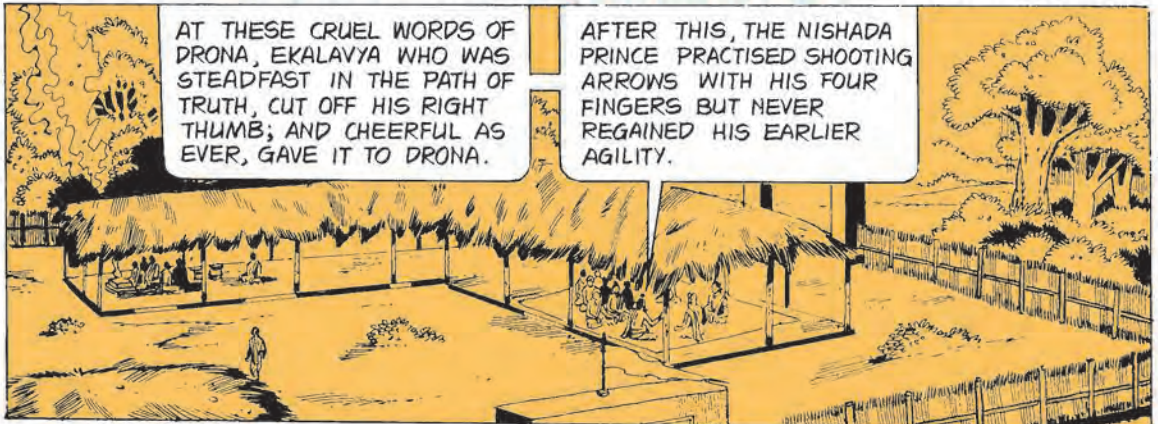
"AND DRONA SAID:

GIVE ME THE
THUMB OF YOUR
RIGHT HAND.

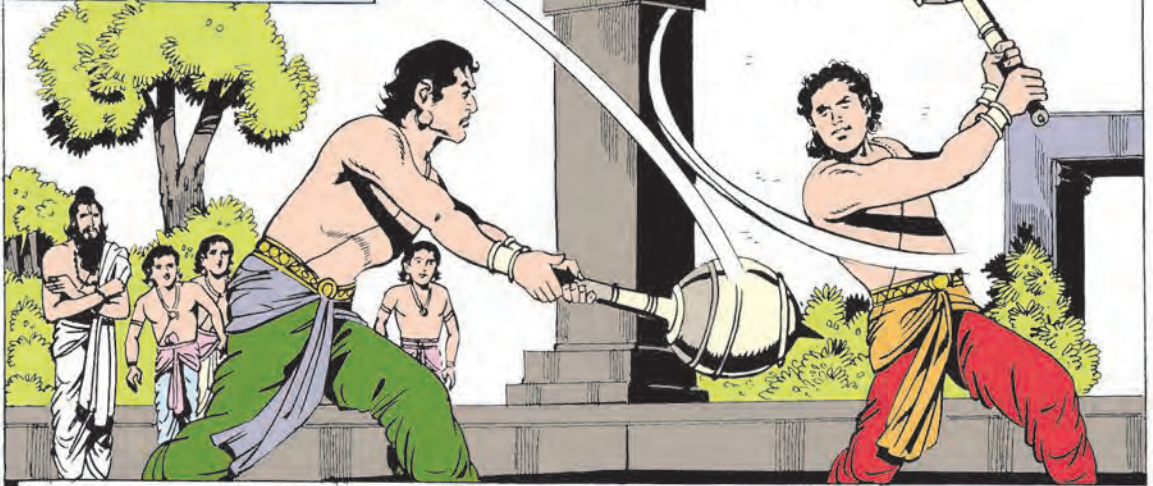


AT THESE CRUEL WORDS OF
DRONA, EKALAVYA WHO WAS
STEADFAST IN THE PATH OF
TRUTH, CUT OFF HIS RIGHT
THUMB; AND CHEERFUL AS
EVER, GAVE IT TO DRONA.

AFTER THIS, THE NISHADA
PRINCE PRACTISED SHOOTING
ARROWS WITH HIS FOUR
FINGERS BUT NEVER
REGAINED HIS EARLIER
AGILITY.



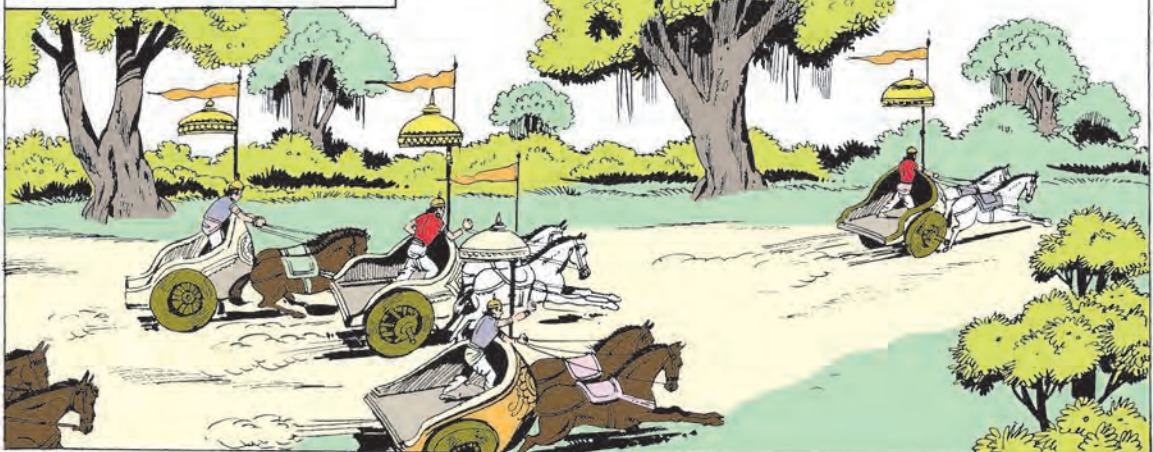
"OF DRONA'S PUPILS, TWO BECAME EXPERTS IN THE USE OF THE MACE. THESE WERE DURYODHANA THE KAURAVA AND BHEEMA THE PANDAVA. THEY WERE, HOWEVER, ALWAYS JEALOUS OF EACH OTHER.



"ASHWATTHAMA EXCELLED IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF ESOTERIC WEAPONS WHILE NAKULA AND SAHADEVA WERE IN THE FOREFRONT OF SWORDSMEN.



"AND YUDHISHTHIRA SURPASSED EVERYONE AS A CHARIOTEER.



BUT ARJUNA ALONE WAS VERSATILE IN HIS SKILLS. IN INTELLIGENCE, IN CONCENTRATION, IN STRENGTH, IN PRESENCE OF MIND AND IN DEVOTION TO HIS GURU, HE WAS ABOVE ALL OTHERS. THUS THOUGH THE INSTRUCTION WAS THE SAME FOR ALL, ARJUNA LEFT ALL OTHERS BEHIND, AND BECAME JUSTLY FAMOUS THROUGHOUT THE LAND.

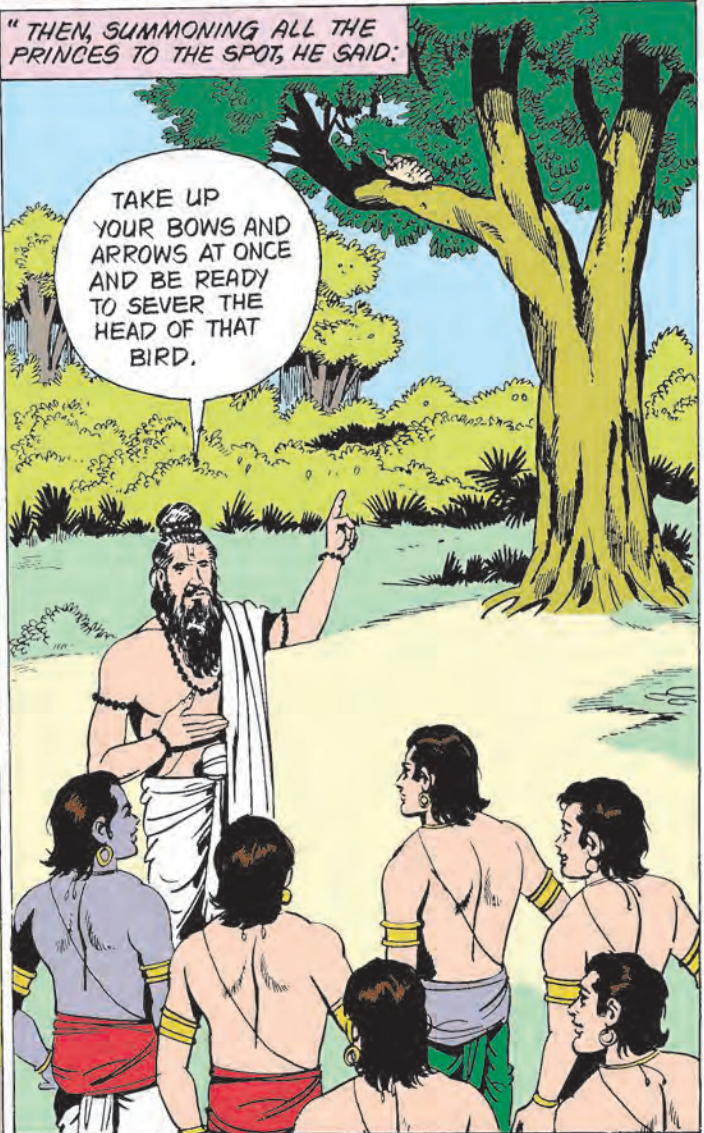


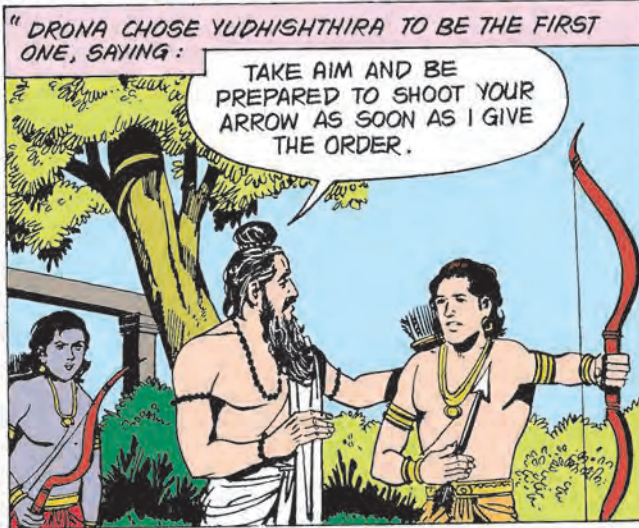
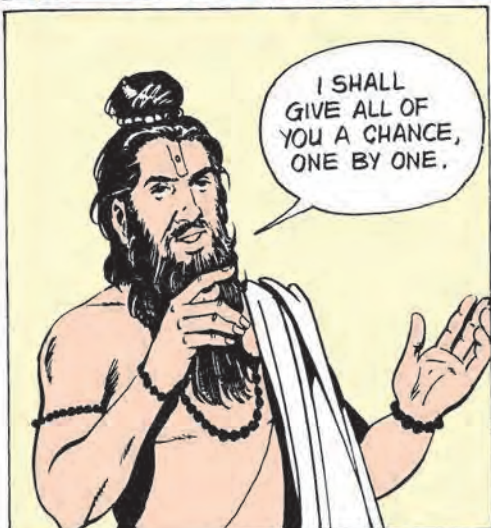
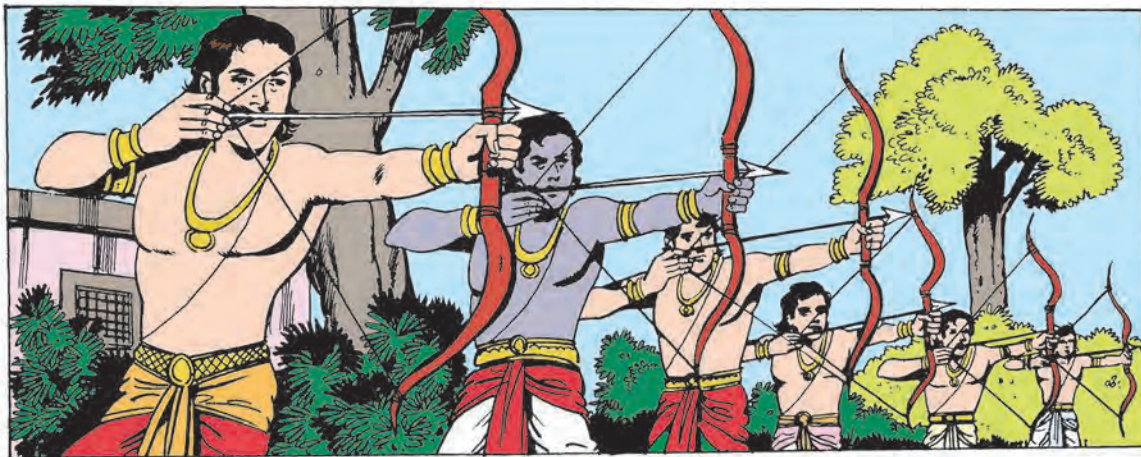
"WHEN THE PRINCES HAD LEARNT ALL THAT WAS TO BE TAUGHT, DRONA, WISHING TO TEST THEIR PROWESS, HAD A WOODEN BIRD PLACED AS A TARGET ON THE TOP OF THE TREE.



"THEN, SUMMONING ALL THE PRINCES TO THE SPOT, HE SAID:

TAKE UP YOUR BOWS AND ARROWS AT ONCE AND BE READY TO SEVER THE HEAD OF THAT BIRD.

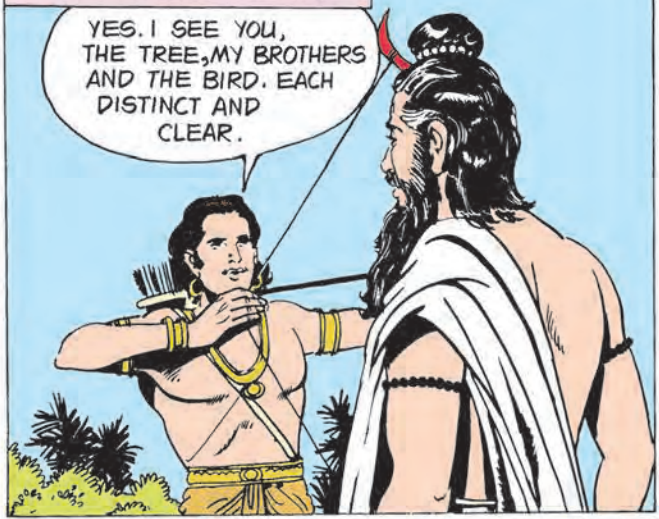




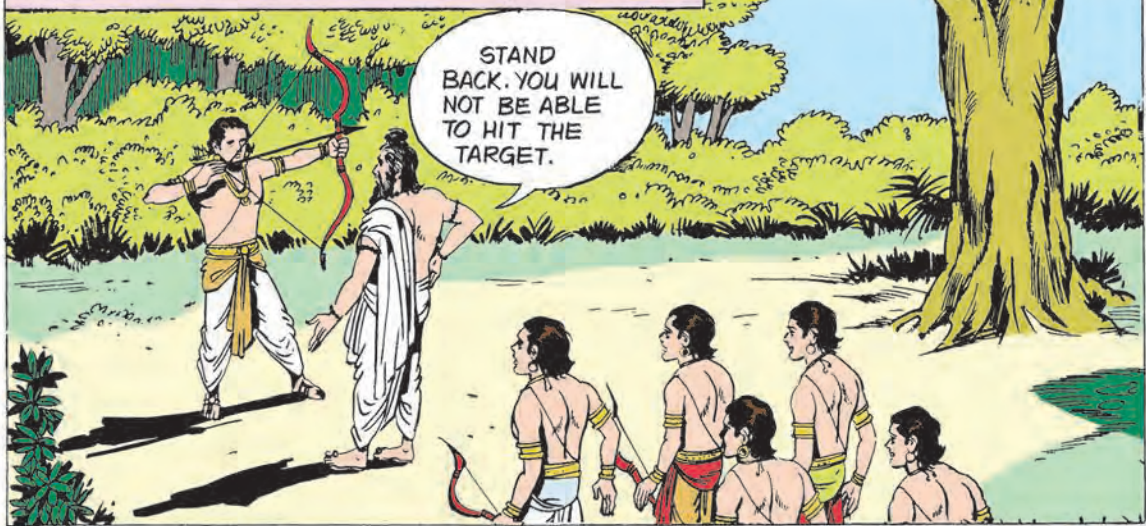
"THEN DRONA AGAIN ASKED HIM:



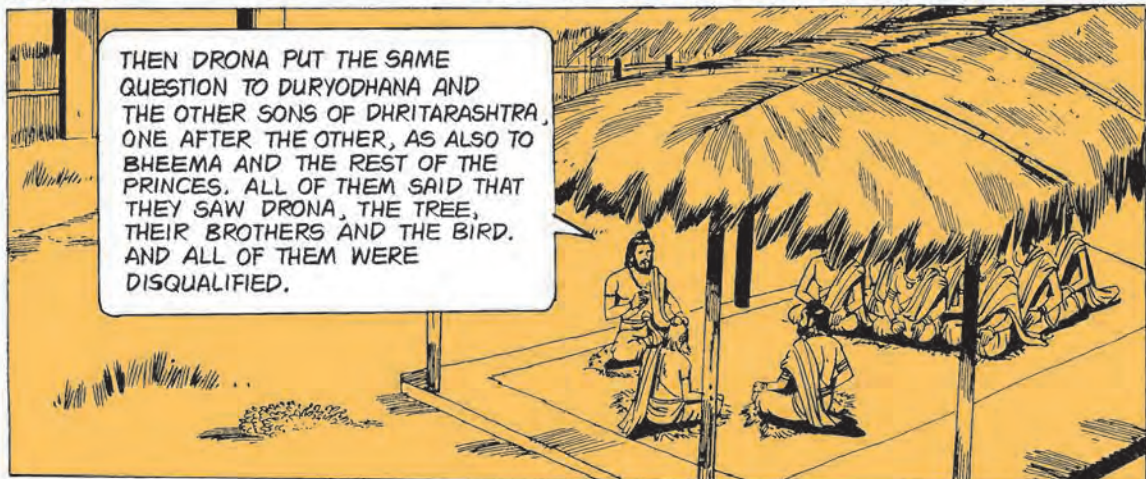
"YUDHISHTHIRA ANSWERED:



"VEXED WITH YUDHISHTHIRA'S ANSWER, DRONA SAID:

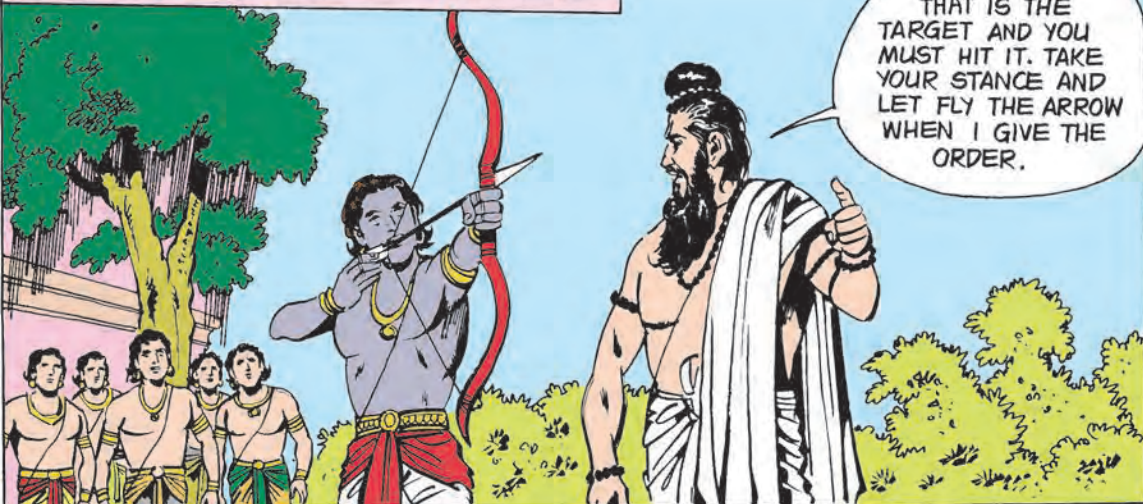


THEN DRONA PUT THE SAME QUESTION TO DURYODHANA AND THE OTHER SONS OF DHRTIRASHTRA, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, AS ALSO TO BHEEMA AND THE REST OF THE PRINCES. ALL OF THEM SAID THAT THEY SAW DRONA, THE TREE, THEIR BROTHERS AND THE BIRD, AND ALL OF THEM WERE DISQUALIFIED.



" THEN DRONA SAID TO ARJUNA WITH A SMILE :

THAT IS THE
TARGET AND YOU
MUST HIT IT. TAKE
YOUR STANCE AND
LET FLY THE ARROW
WHEN I GIVE THE
ORDER.



" ARJUNA TOOK HIS STANCE. AND DRONA
ASKED HIM:

DO YOU SEE
THE BIRD AND
THE TREE AND
ME?



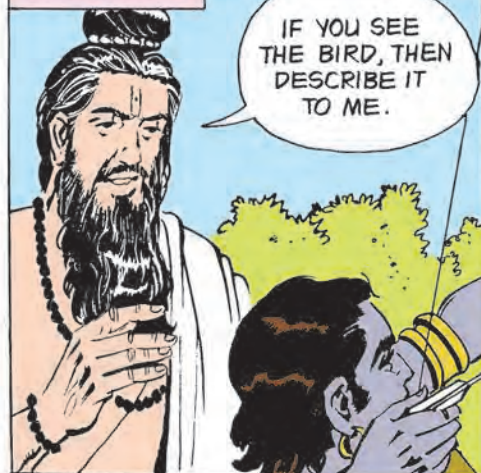
" ARJUNA REPLIED:

I SEE ONLY
THE BIRD.
AND NEITHER
THE TREE
NOR YOU.



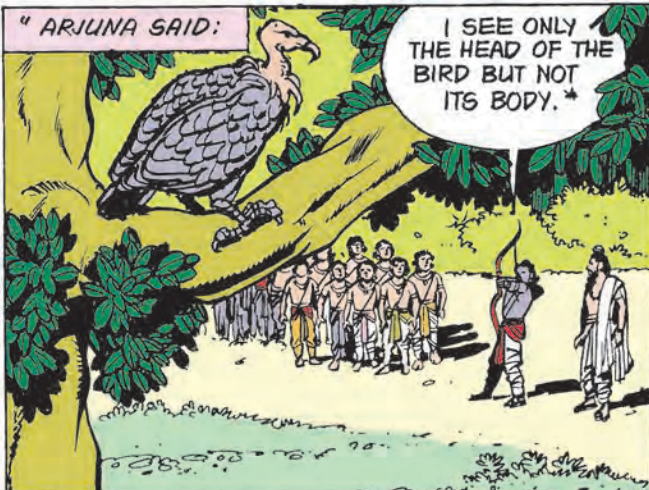
" PLEASED WITH HIS ANSWER, DRONA
SAID AGAIN:

IF YOU SEE
THE BIRD, THEN
DESCRIBE IT
TO ME.



" ARJUNA SAID:

I SEE ONLY
THE HEAD OF THE
BIRD BUT NOT
ITS BODY. *

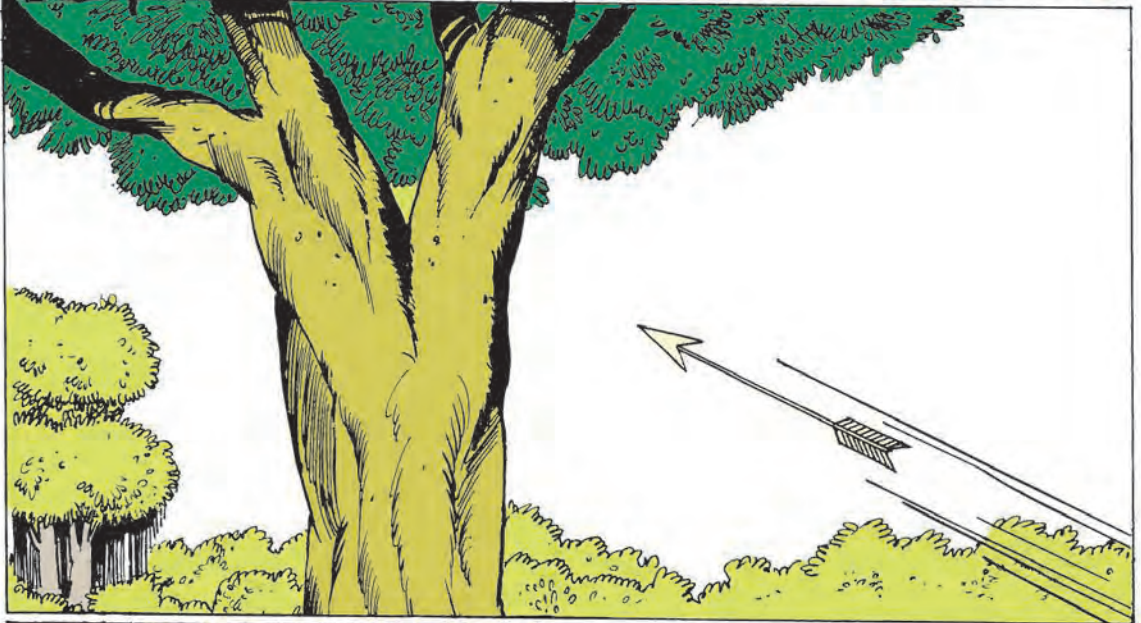
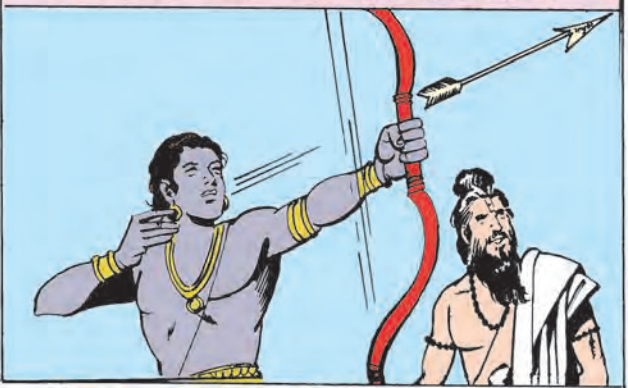


* शिरः पश्यामि भासस्य न गात्रमिति सोऽब्रवीत् "

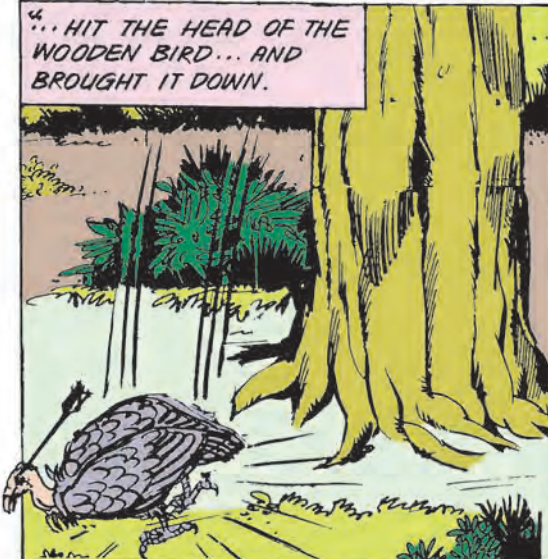
"THIS GLADDENED THE HEART OF DRONA AND HE GAVE THE ORDER:



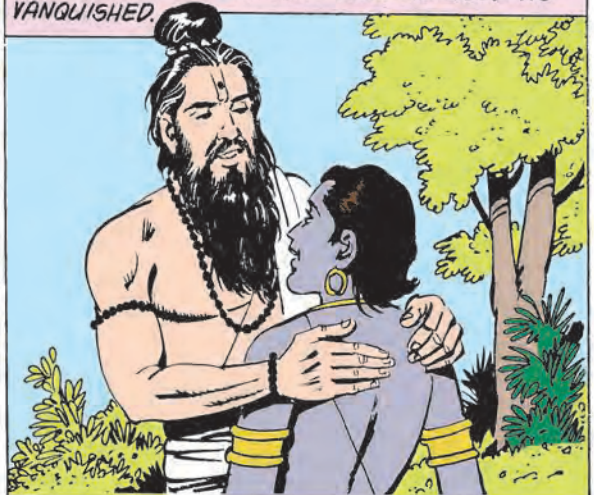
"THE ARROW FLEW FROM ARJUNA'S BOW..."



"... HIT THE HEAD OF THE WOODEN BIRD... AND BROUGHT IT DOWN.



"AND DRONA HELD ARJUNA CLOSE AND THOUGHT THAT DRUPADA WAS AS GOOD AS VANQUISHED.



"AFTER A FEW DAYS, DRONA AND HIS DISCIPLES WENT FOR A BATH IN THE SACRED RIVER GANGA.



"AS DRONA ENTERED THE STREAM, A HUGE CROCODILE SEIZED HIM BY THE THIGH.



"THOUGH HE WAS CAPABLE OF FREEING HIMSELF, HE CALLED OUT IN APPARENT ALARM:

SLAY THIS MONSTER, AND SAVE ME!



"EVEN AS HE SPOKE, ARJUNA HIT THE MONSTER WITH FIVE SHARP ARROWS WHILE THE OTHER DISCIPLES STOOD STILL IN SHOCK AND CONFUSION.



"ARJUNA'S ARROWS CUT THE MONSTER INTO PIECES AND DRONA WAS SET FREE."

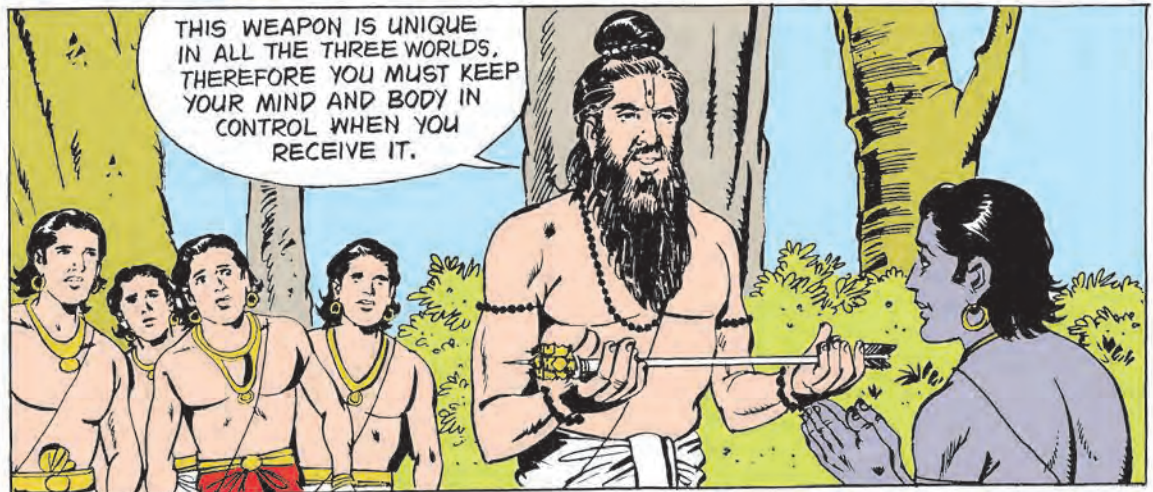


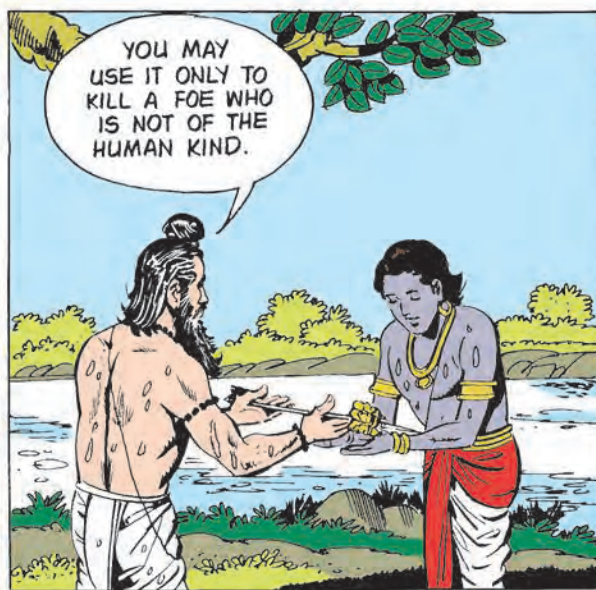
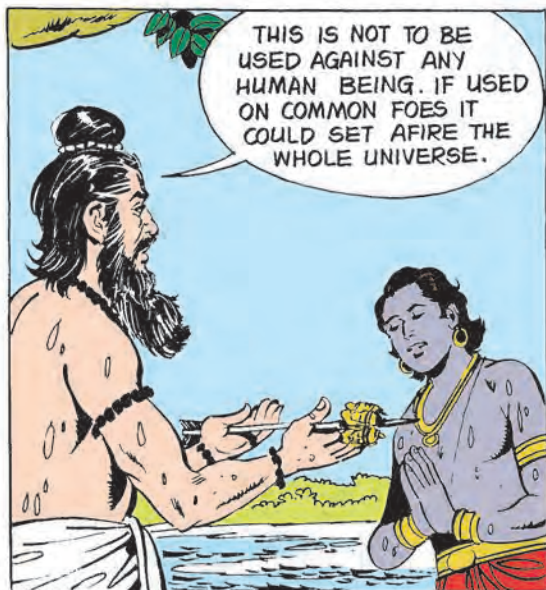
"IMMENSELY PLEASED HE SAID TO ARJUNA:

RECEIVE FROM ME
THE SUPERIOR AND
IRRESISTIBLE MISSILE,
BRAHMASHIRAS, ALONG
WITH THE SECRETS
OF ITS USE.



THIS WEAPON IS UNIQUE
IN ALL THE THREE WORLDS.
THEREFORE YOU MUST KEEP
YOUR MIND AND BODY IN
CONTROL WHEN YOU
RECEIVE IT.

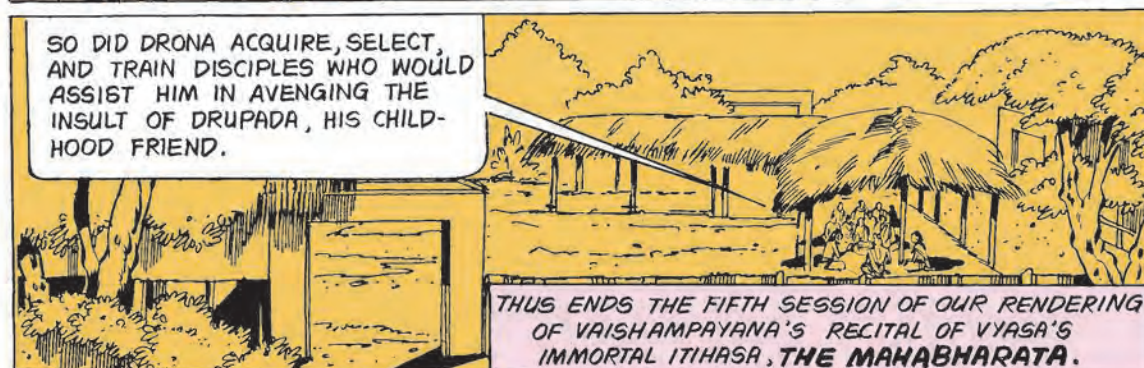




"ARJUNA RECEIVED THE GREAT WEAPON IN ALL HUMILITY AND VOWED THAT HE WOULD ABIDE BY THE PRECEPTS OF THE GURU. DRONA ONCE AGAIN SAID TO HIM:



SO DID DRONA ACQUIRE, SELECT, AND TRAIN DISCIPLES WHO WOULD ASSIST HIM IN AVENGING THE INSULT OF DRUPADA, HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND.



Mahabharata-6

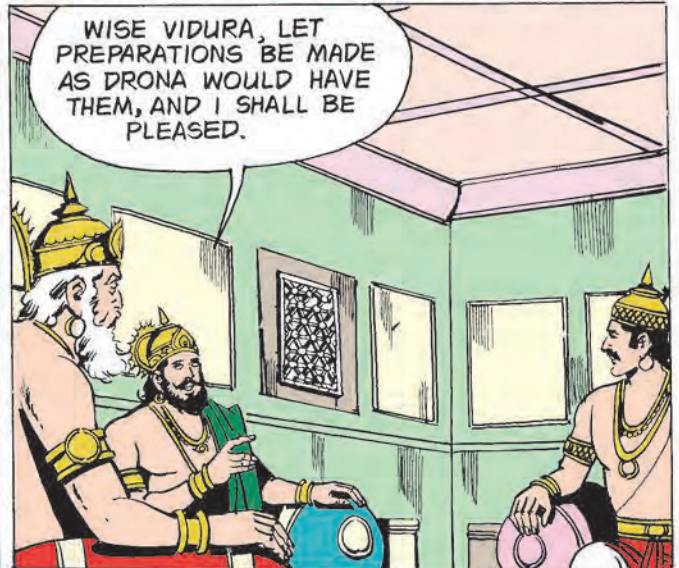
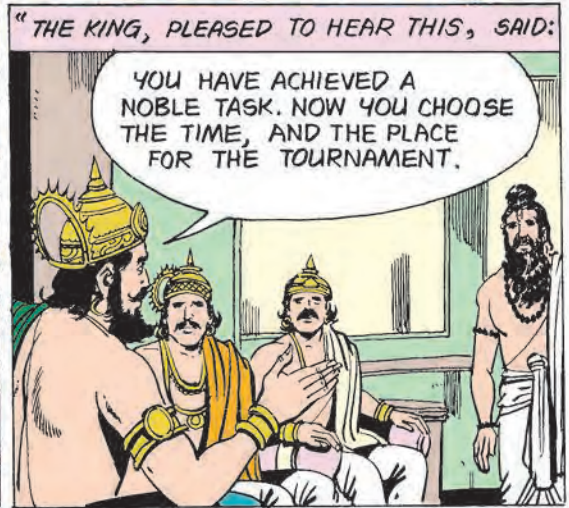
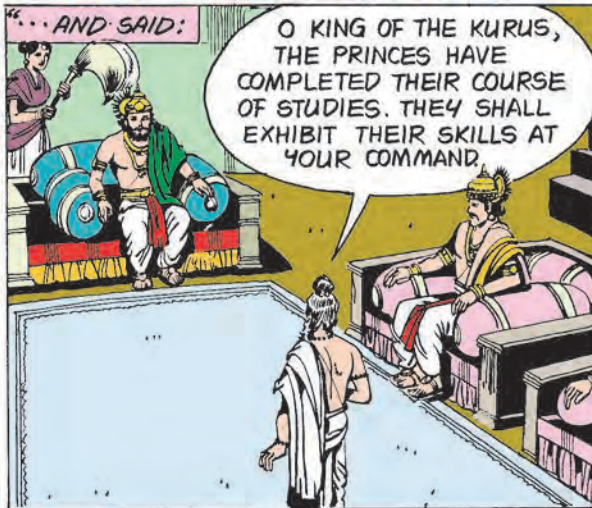
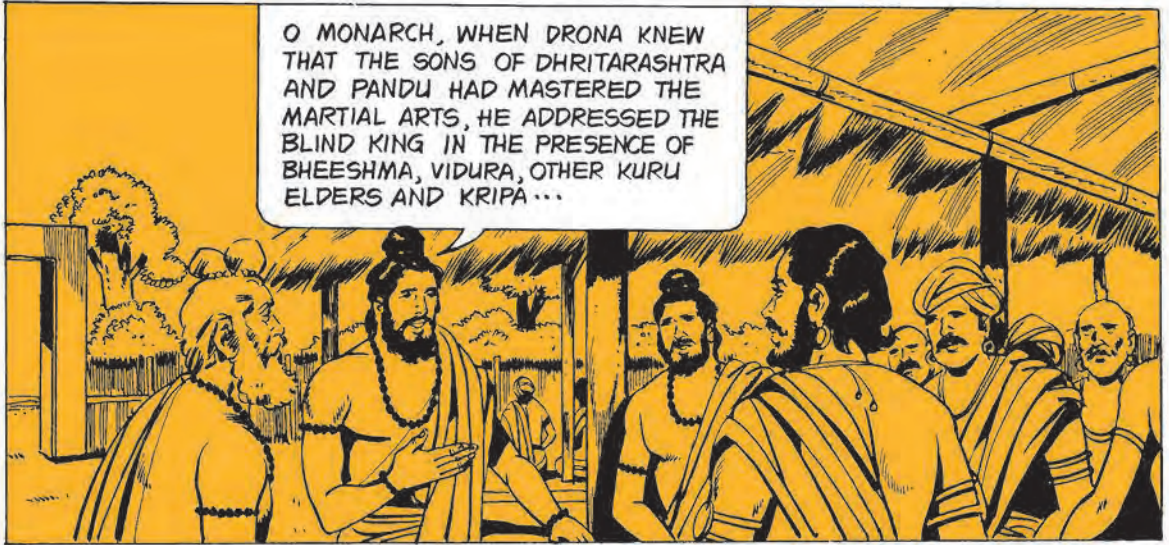
ENTER KARNA

VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC, BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA, AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA — GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA — AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA.

THE FIFTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA SPOKE OF HOW DRONA, SCORNFUL BY DRUPADA THE KING OF PANCHALA, CAME TO HASTINAPURA; OF HOW BHEESHMA APPOINTED HIM GURU OF THE PRINCES; AND OF HOW ARJUNA BY HIS PROWESS IN ARMS BECAME THE GURU'S FAVOURITE, TO THE CHAGRIN OF KARNA.





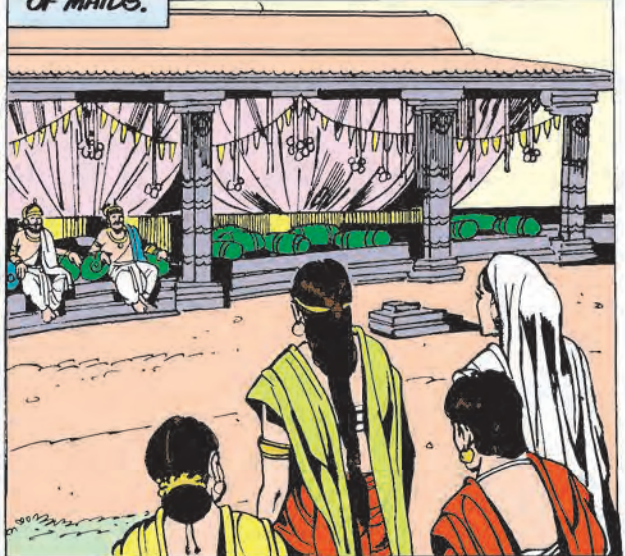
"DRONA MEASURED OUT A PIECE OF SUITABLE LAND AND HAD IT SANCTIFIED AT AN AUSPICIOUS TIME. THERE THE CRAFTSMEN BUILT PAVILIONS FOR THE ROYALTY; AND WEALTHY CITIZENS HAD TENTS PITCHED FOR THEMSELVES.



"ON THE DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT, THE KING MADE HIS ENTRY ACCOMPANIED BY BHEESHMA, KRIPA AND THE RETINUE OF MINISTERS.



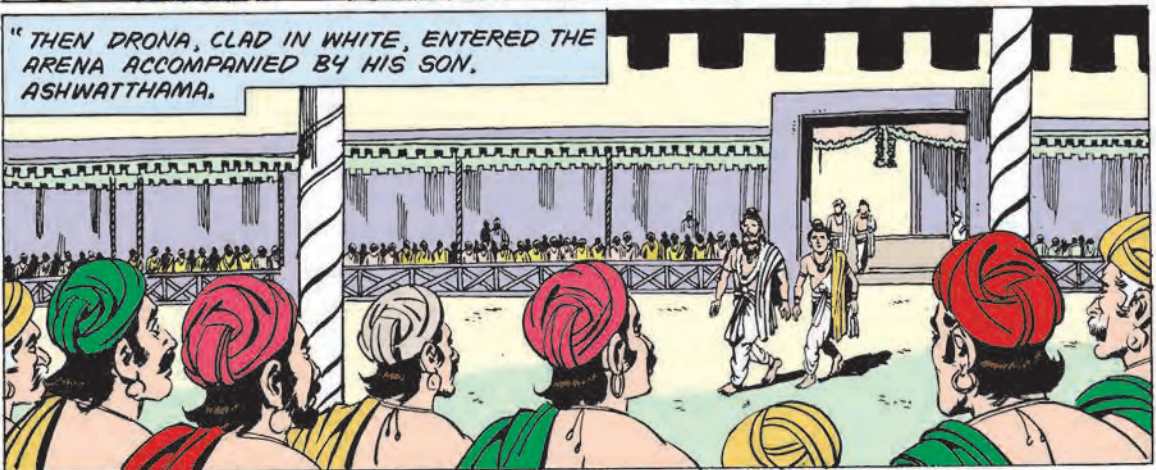
"THEN CAME GANDHARI AND KUNTI AND OTHER IMPERIAL WOMEN WITH THEIR RETINUE OF MAIDS.



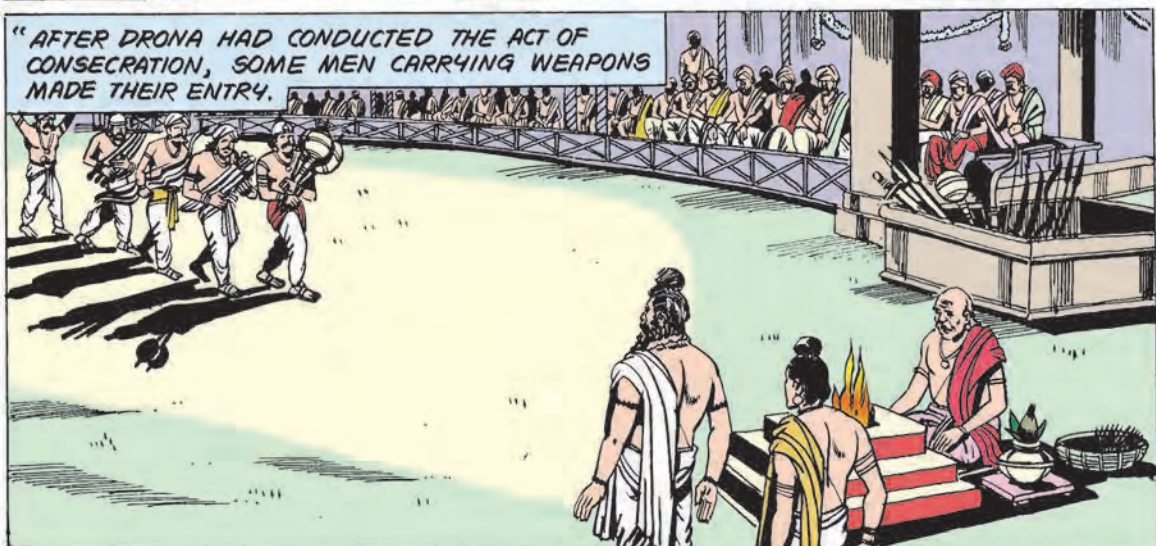
"AND MEN AND WOMEN OF DIVERSE STATIONS AND ORDERS, EAGER TO WITNESS THE FEATS OF THE PRINCES, THROGGED THE SPOT TILL IN A SHORT WHILE THERE GATHERED A VAST ASSEMBLY."



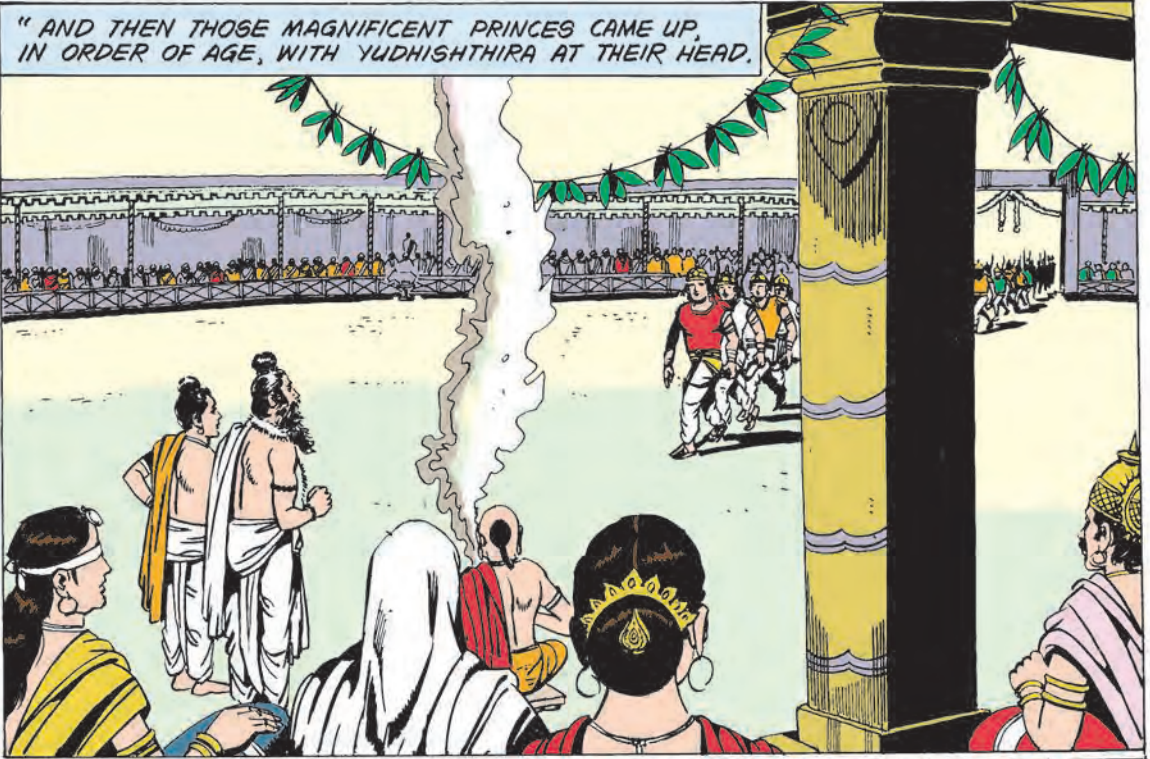
"THEN DRONA, CLAD IN WHITE, ENTERED THE ARENA ACCOMPANIED BY HIS SON, ASHWATTHAMA."



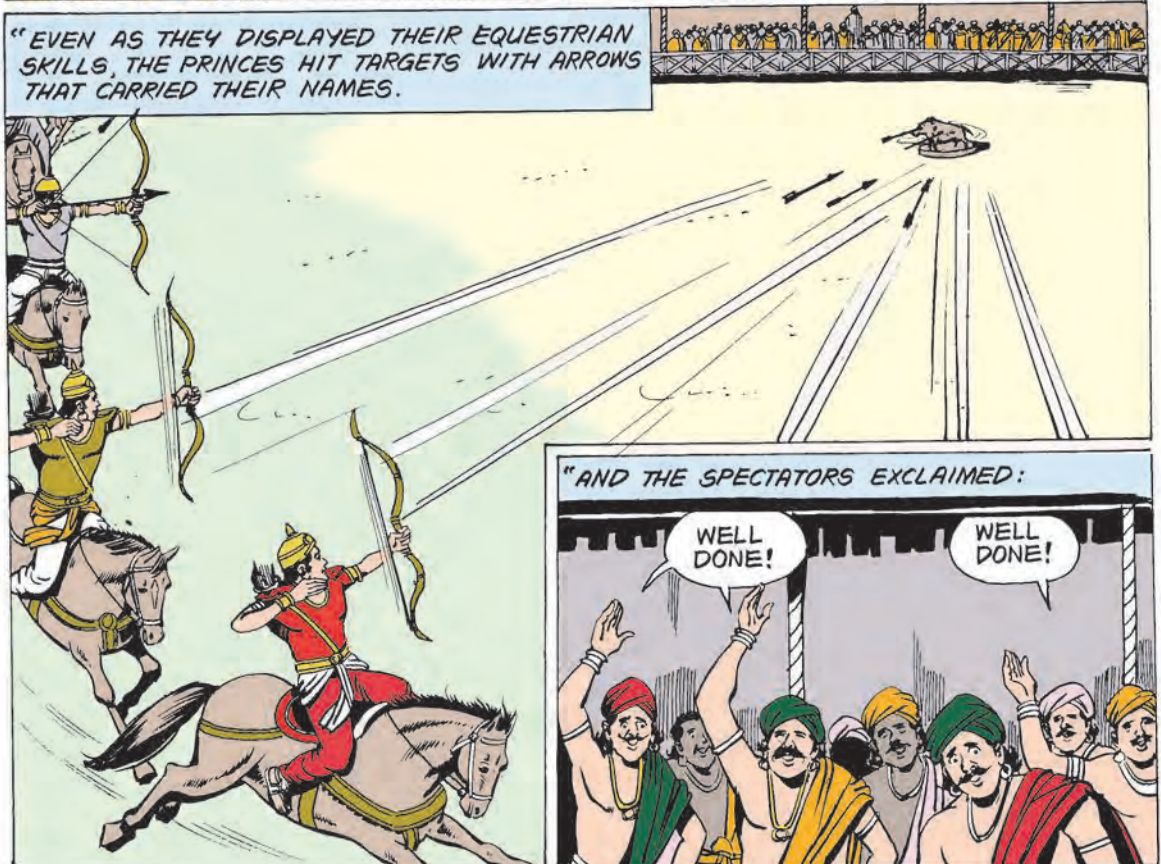
"AFTER DRONA HAD CONDUCTED THE ACT OF CONSECRATION, SOME MEN CARRYING WEAPONS MADE THEIR ENTRY."



"AND THEN THOSE MAGNIFICENT PRINCES CAME UP, IN ORDER OF AGE, WITH YUDHISHTHIRA AT THEIR HEAD."



"EVEN AS THEY DISPLAYED THEIR EQUESTRIAN SKILLS, THE PRINCES HIT TARGETS WITH ARROWS THAT CARRIED THEIR NAMES."

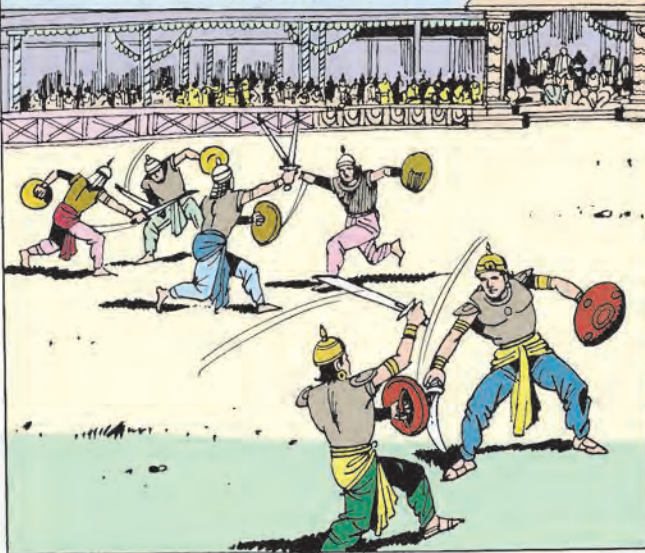


"AND THE SPECTATORS EXCLAIMED:

WELL DONE!

WELL DONE!

"PROGRESSIVELY THE PRINCES EXHIBITED THEIR SKILL IN ARCHERY, IN CHARIOT RALLIES, IN FIGHTS ASTRIDE ELEPHANTS AND HORSES, AND IN FREE-HAND COMBATS. LAST OF ALL THEY DISPLAYED THEIR SWORDSMANSHIP.



WITH THE SWORD AND THE BUCKLER, O MONARCH, THEY REVEALED THROUGH WELL-WROUGHT BODIES THEIR FIRM STANCE, STRONG GRIP AND NIMBLE TURNS.



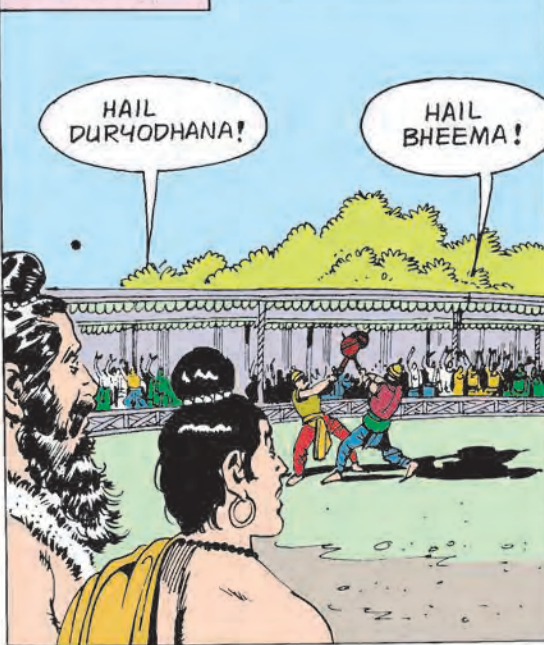
"AND THEN THE CONSTANT RIVALS, BHEEMA AND DURYODHANA, MOVED INTO THE ARENA.



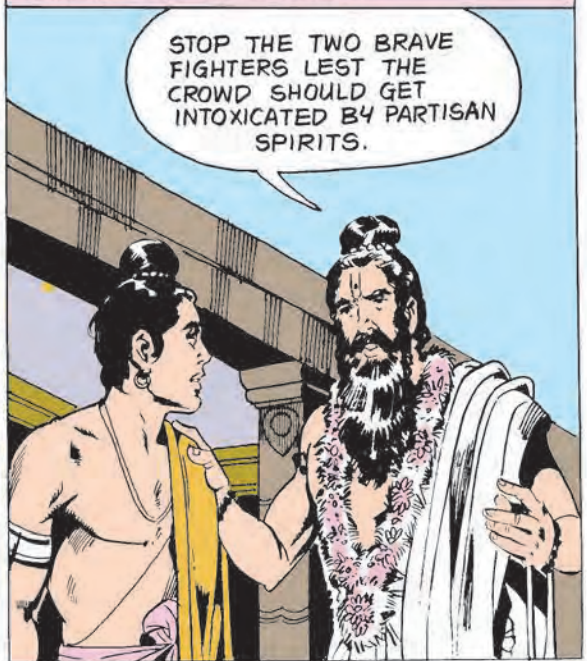
"THEY FOUGHT, MOVING NOW TO THE LEFT, NOW TO THE RIGHT, NOW IN A CIRCLE AND NOW ALL OVER, LIKE TWO ENRAGED ELEPHANTS. AND VIDURA DESCRIBED EACH MOVE TO DHRITARASHTRA AND KUNTI TO GANDHARI.



"THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE TWO SPLIT THE CROWD. SOME CHEERED ONE, SOME THE OTHER."



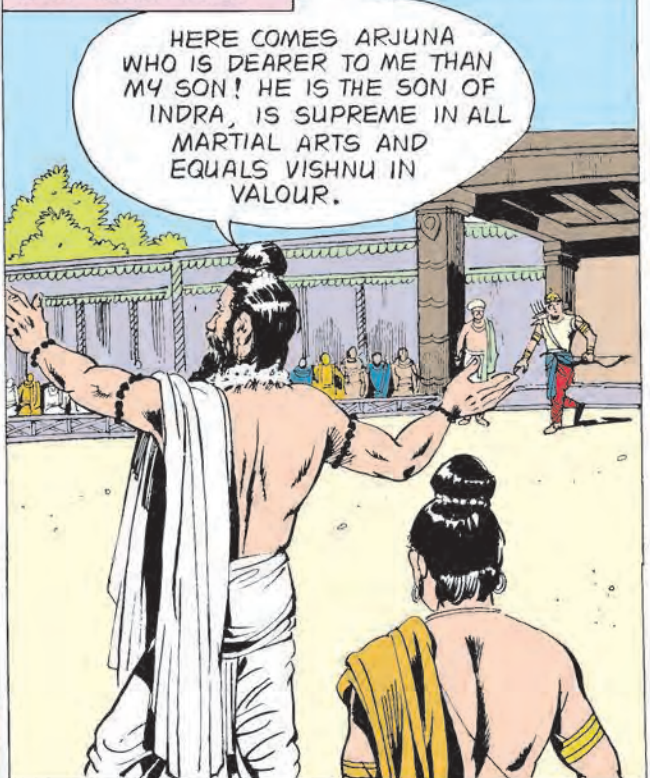
"AND PERCEIVING THIS, THE CLEVER DRONA SAID TO HIS SON:



"ASHWATTHAMA RUSHED INTO THE ARENA AND RESTRAINED THE TWO WARRIORS."



"THEN DRONA CAME INTO THE ARENA AND, ORDERING THE MUSIC TO BE STOPPED, SAID IN A RINGING VOICE:



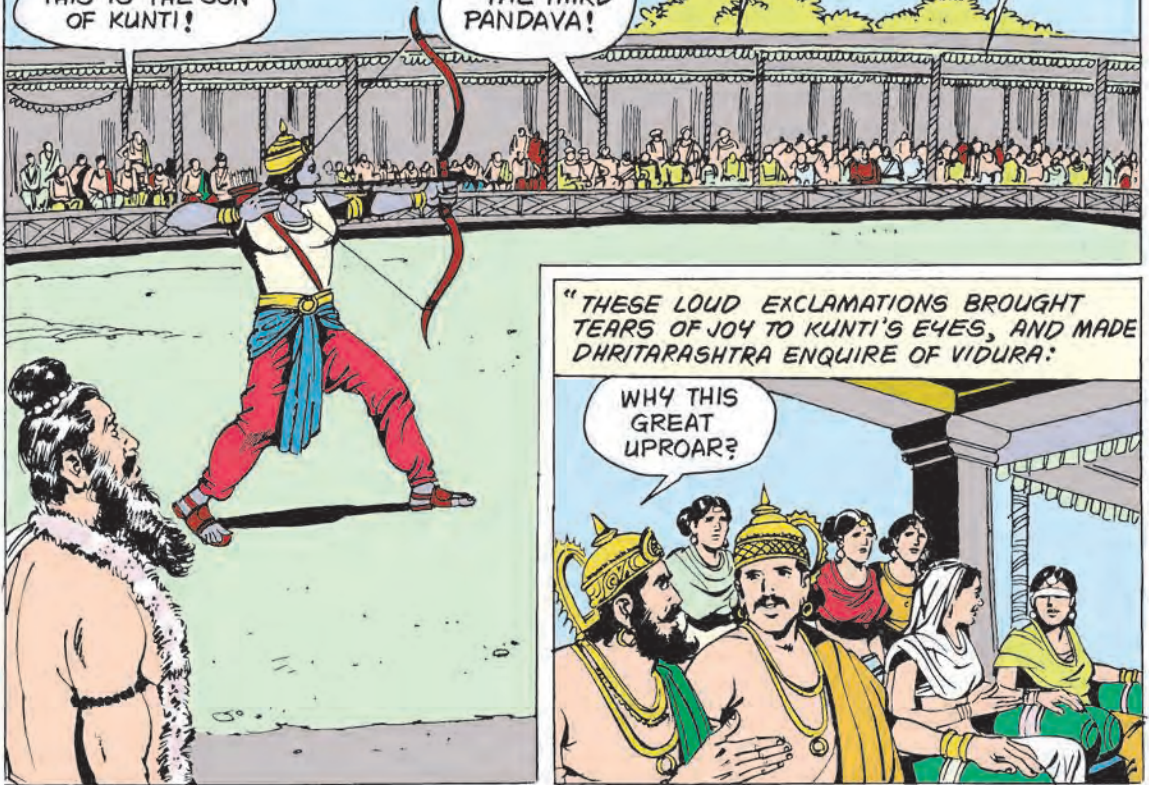
"HAVING INVOKED DIVINE GRACE, ARJUNA, CLAD IN GOLDEN COAT OF MAIL, STOOD LIKE A CLOUD SET ABLAZE BY THE EVENING SUN. THE DELIGHTED CROWD HAILED HIM EXCLAIMING:

THIS IS THE SON OF KUNTI!

THIS IS THE THIRD PANDAVA!

THIS IS THE SON OF MIGHTY INDRA!

HE IS THE REDEEMER OF THE KURUS!



"THESE LOUD EXCLAMATIONS BROUGHT TEARS OF JOY TO KUNTI'S EYES, AND MADE DHRTIRASHTRA ENQUIRE OF VIDURA:

WHY THIS GREAT UPROAR?



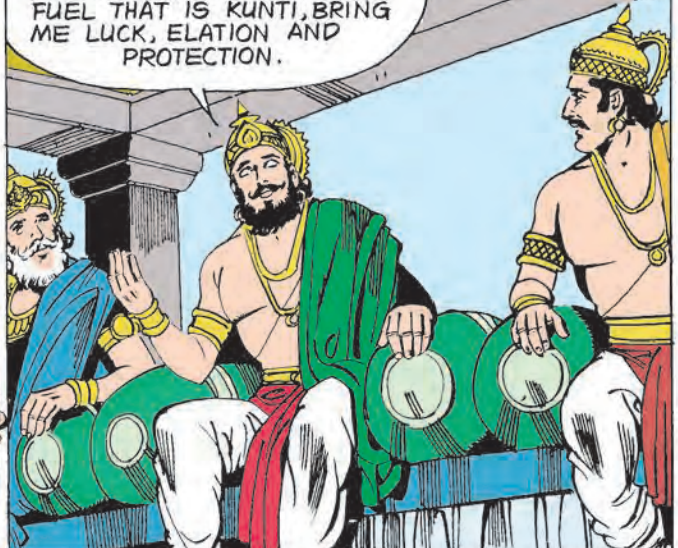
"VIDURA REPLIED:

ARJUNA, THE SON OF PANDU, HAS ENTERED THE LISTS.



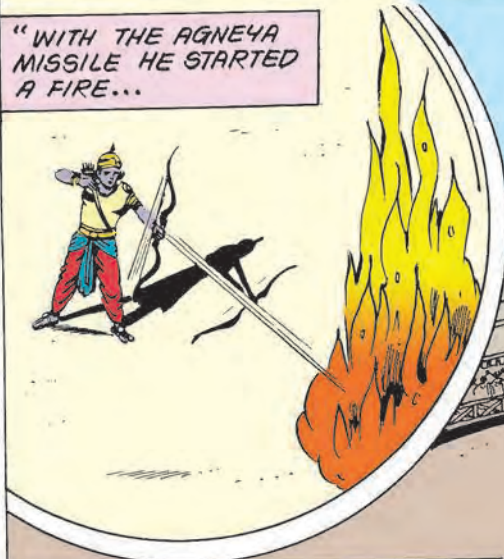
"AND DHRTIRASHTRA SAID:

THE THREE FLAMING SONS, SPRUNG FROM THE SACRED FUEL THAT IS KUNTI, BRING ME LUCK, ELATION AND PROTECTION.



"ONCE THE EXCITEMENT OF THE CROWD HAD SUBSIDED, ARJUNA BEGAN TO DISPLAY HIS RESILIENCE TO HIS GURU.

"WITH THE AGNEYA MISSILE HE STARTED A FIRE...



"...AND BY THE VARUNA MISSILE, A COLUMN OF WATER.



"BY THE VAYAVYA MISSILE HE BROUGHT FORTH A GALE OF WIND, AND BY THE PARJANYA MISSILE, CLOUDS.



"BY THE BHAUMA MISSILE HE ENTERED INTO THE EARTH...



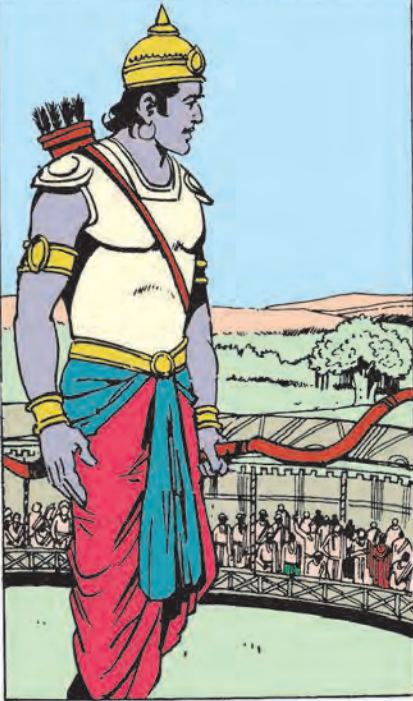
"...AND BY THE PARVATA MISSILE HE SET UP MOUNTAINS.



"THEN WITH THE ANTARDHANA MISSILE HE MADE HIMSELF INVISIBLE.



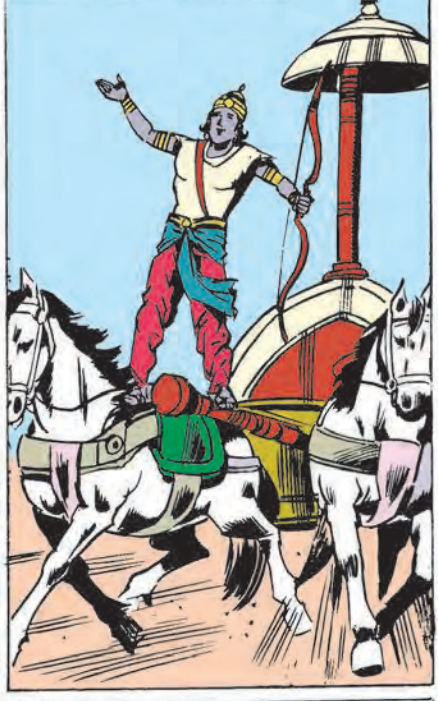
"FOR A SPLIT SECOND HE
MADE HIMSELF TALL ...



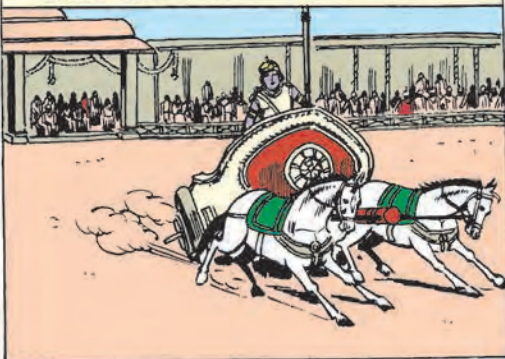
"... AND THEN THE
NEXT INSTANT
SHORT.



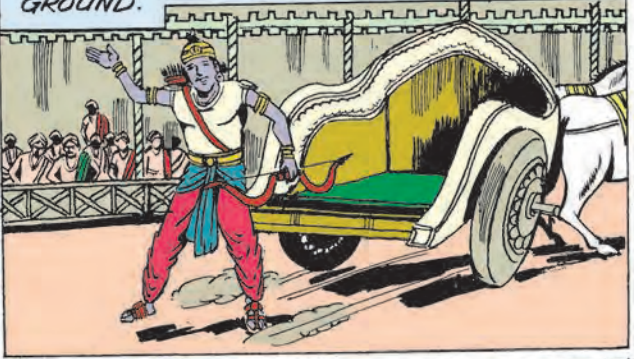
"NOW HE WAS ON THE YOKE
OF THE CHARIOT...



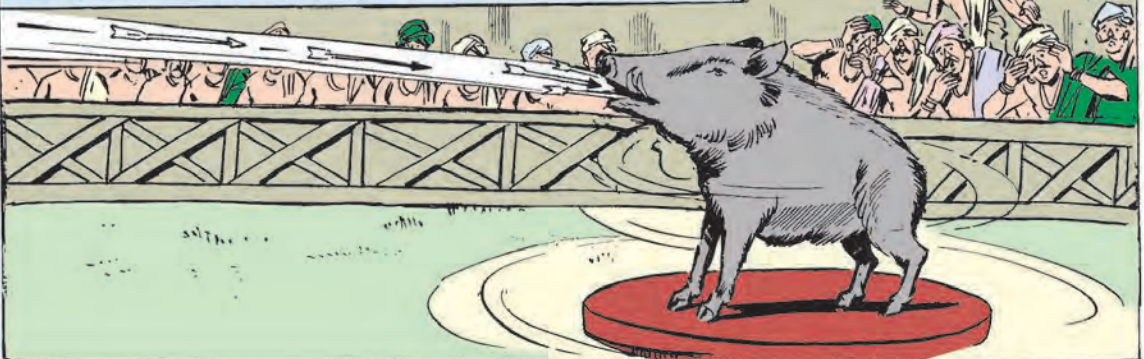
"... AND NOW INSIDE THE CHARIOT.



"AND THE NEXT SECOND HE WAS ON THE
GROUND.

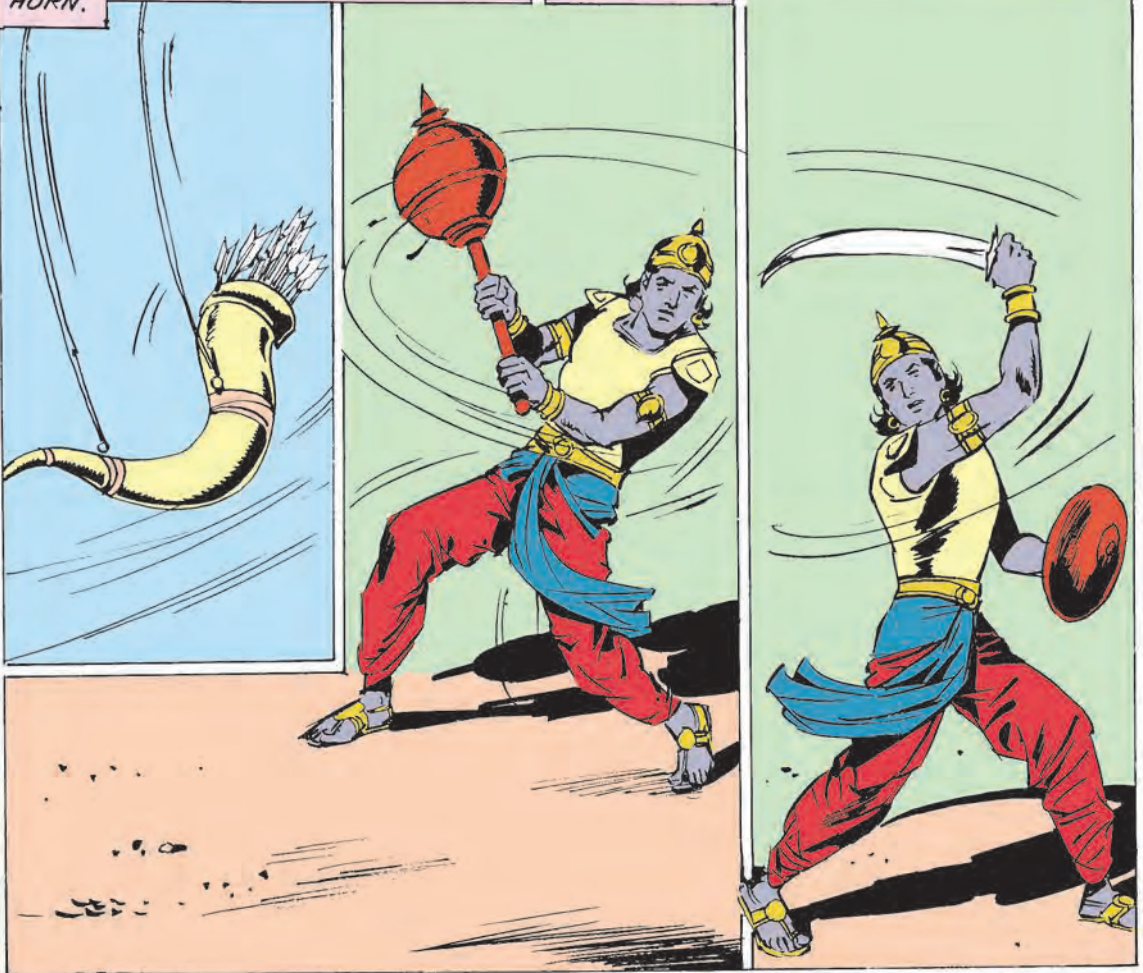


"HE LET FLY FIVE ARROWS SIMULTANEOUSLY INTO
THE MOUTH OF A REVOLVING IRON BOAR...



"...AND FOUND THE MARK FOR TWENTY-ONE OF HIS FLYING ARROWS, IN ONE SHOT, IN THE HOLLOW OF A SWINGING HORN.

"THEN ARJUNA EXHIBITED ALL THE COMPLEX MOVES IN FIGHTS WITH THE MACE AND THE SWORD.

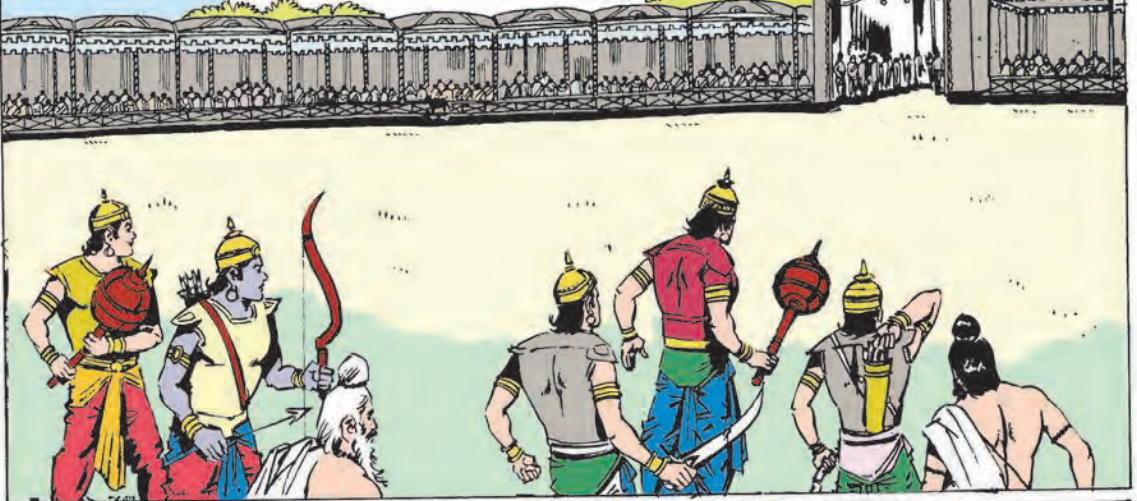


"WHEN THE EVENTS WERE ALMOST OVER, WHEN THE INTEREST HAD WANED AND WHEN THE MUSIC WAS STILLED, THERE CAME FROM THE GATES THE SOUND OF THE SLAPPING OF ARMS, MIGHTY LIKE THE THUNDERBOLT SIGNIFYING IMMENSE STRENGTH, AND AT ONCE A THOUGHT PASSED THROUGH THE CROWD:

ARE THE MOUNTAINS CRACKING OR IS THE EARTH SPLITTING OR IS THE SKY ECHOING THE JOSTLE OF HEAVY CLOUDS?



"THEN THE SPECTATORS TURNED TOWARDS THE GATE. MEANWHILE THE PANDAVAS HAD TAKEN THEIR STANCE AROUND DRONA; AND THE KAURAVAS AND ASHWATTHAMA AROUND DURYODHANA.



"KARNA THEN STRODE IN, EVEN AS THE WONDER-STROCK SPECTATORS MADE WAY FOR HIM. THAT HERO, GLORIOUS IN HIS CONGENITAL ARMOUR AND EARRINGS, BOW IN HAND AND SWORD AT HIS WAIST...



"...ENTERED THE ARENA LIKE A MASSIVE MOUNTAIN ON THE MOVE.



O MONARCH, KARNA THE SPLENDROUS ISSUE OF SURYA AND THE SON OF KUNTI STOOD TOWERING IN ALL HIS COUNTLESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS LIKE A GOLDEN PALM-TREE.



"THE MIGHTY WARRIOR TOOK IN THE WHOLE SCENE WITH HIS EYES..."

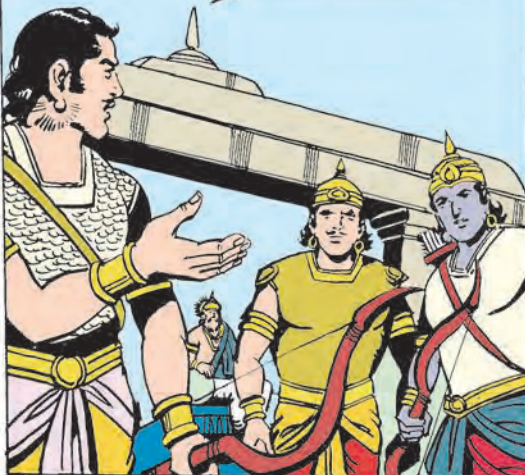


"... AND BOWED, WITH SCANT RESPECT, TO DRONA AND KRIPA WHILE THE VAST ASSEMBLY, RESTLESS IN THEIR CURIOSITY YET STILL WITH ASTONISHMENT, THOUGHT:



"AND THE OFFSPRING OF THE SUN, UNAWARE THAT ARJUNA WAS HIS BROTHER, SAID TO HIM IN A THUNDERING VOICE:

O ARJUNA, DO NOT EXULT OVER YOUR FEATS. I SHALL PERFORM EACH ONE OF THEM WITH A FINE EXCESS.



"O MONARCH, NO SOONER HAD KARNA SPOKEN THAN THE SPECTATORS WERE UPON THEIR FEET, PROPELLED BY SOME MACHINE AS IT WERE. DURYODHANA WAS PLEASED AND ARJUNA, EMBARRASSED AND ANGRY.



THEN KARNA,
WITH PERMISSION
FROM DRONA, DID
ALL THAT ARJUNA
HAD DONE BEFORE.



"AND, DELIGHTED, DURYODHANA HELD
KARNA CLOSE AND SAID TO HIM:

WELCOME, O MIGHTY WARRIOR. IT IS MY
GOOD FORTUNE THAT YOU ARE WITH
ME. I AM AT YOUR COMMAND AND
THE KINGDOM OF THE KURUS YOURS
TO ENJOY.



"KARNA REPLIED

I TAKE YOUR
WORDS AS ALREADY
FULFILLED. I LONG
FOR A BOUT OF
COMBAT WITH
ARJUNA.



"DURYODHANA SAID:

PARTAKE OF THE
GOOD THINGS OF
LIFE WITH ME. BE GOOD
TO YOUR COMPANIONS
AND BRING DOWN
YOUR FOOT ON YOUR
ENEMIES.



"FEELING DISGRACED, ARJUNA SAID TO KARNA
WHO STOOD LIKE A ROCK AMONGST THE BROTHERS.

O KARNA, SLAIN BY ME
IN COMBAT, YOU SHALL GAIN
THE REALM RESERVED FOR
TRESPASSERS AND FOR THE
BRAGGART.

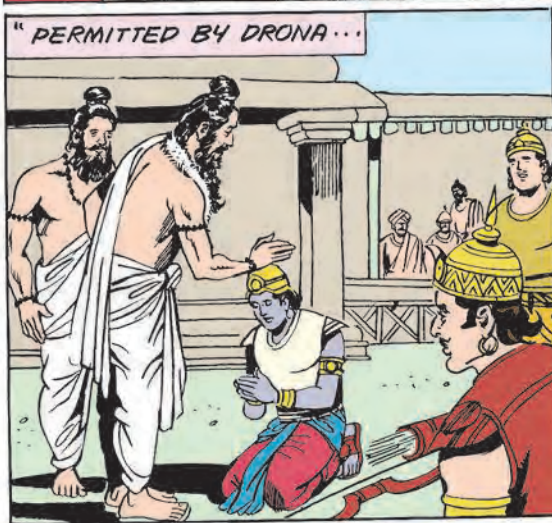


"KARNA REPLIED:

WHY SPAR WITH
WORDS LIKE THE WEAK?
LET YOUR ARROWS SPEAK
FOR YOU. AND I SHALL
SEVER YOUR HEAD WITH
MY ARROWS UNDER
THE VERY WATCHFUL
EYE OF YOUR GURU.



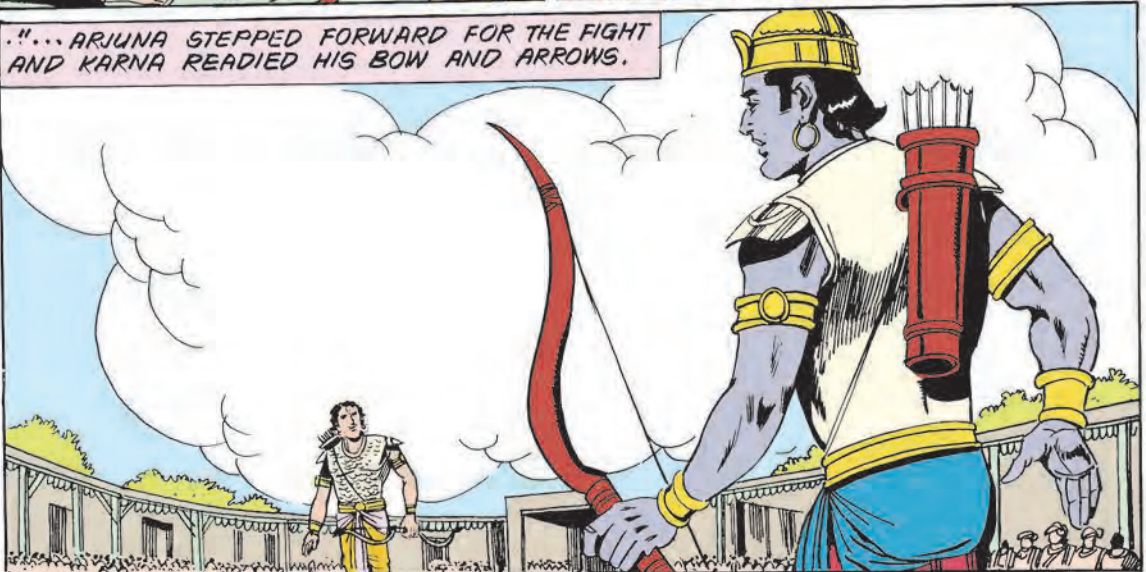
"PERMITTED BY DRONA...



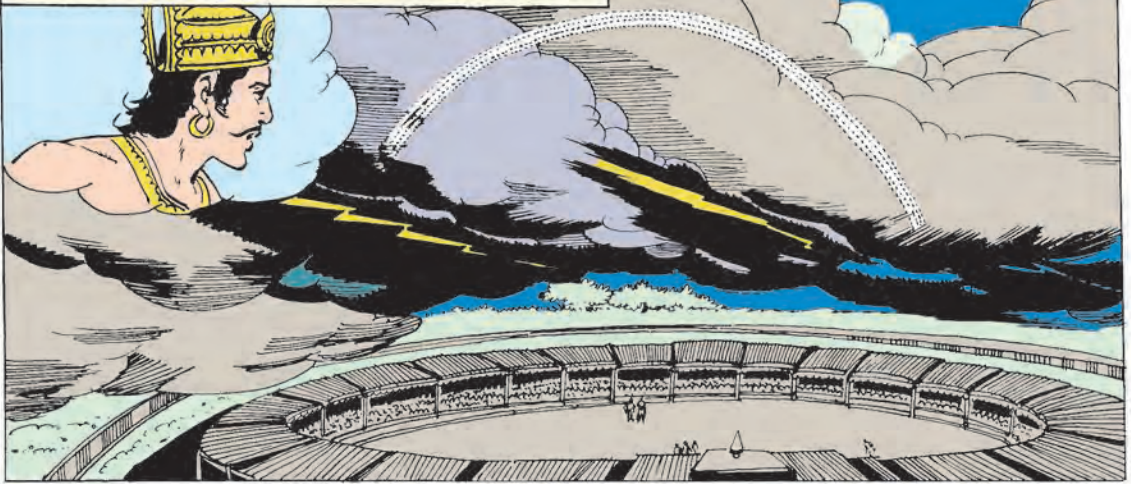
"...AND EMBRACED BY HIS
BROTHERS...



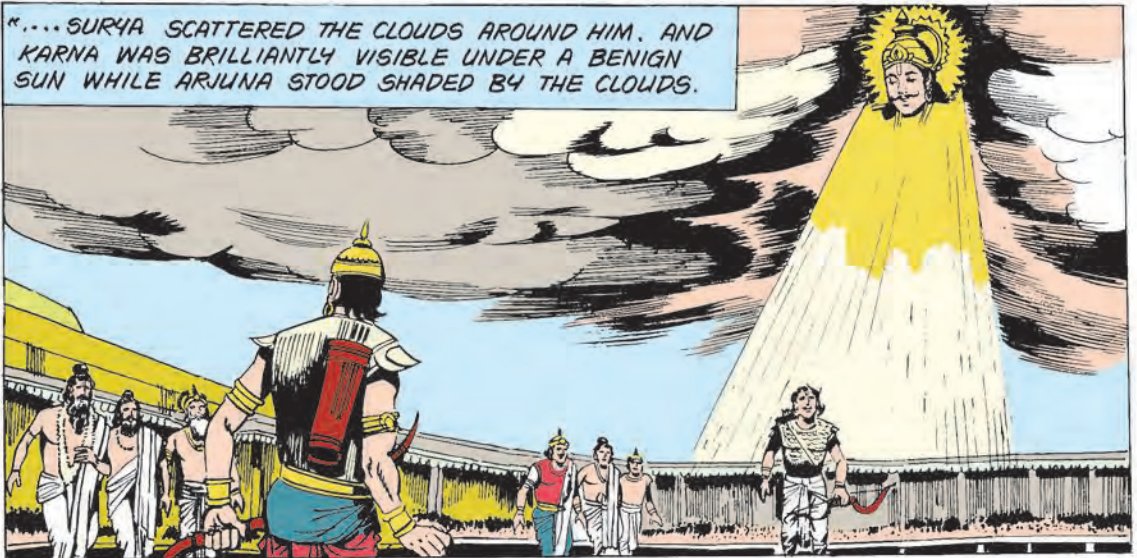
"...ARJUNA STEPPED FORWARD FOR THE FIGHT
AND KARNA READIED HIS BOW AND ARROWS.



"THEN WITH STREAKS OF LIGHTNING AND THE RADIANT BOW OF INDRA, DARK CLOUDS CAME AND COVERED THE SKY. AND PERCEIVING INDRA WATCHING THE ARENA WITH AFFECTION..."



"...SURYA SCATTERED THE CLOUDS AROUND HIM, AND KARNA WAS BRILLIANTLY VISIBLE UNDER A BENIGN SUN WHILE ARJUNA STOOD SHADED BY THE CLOUDS."



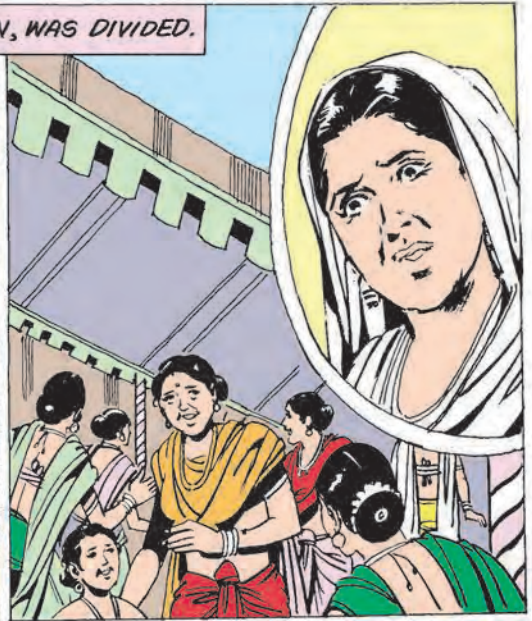
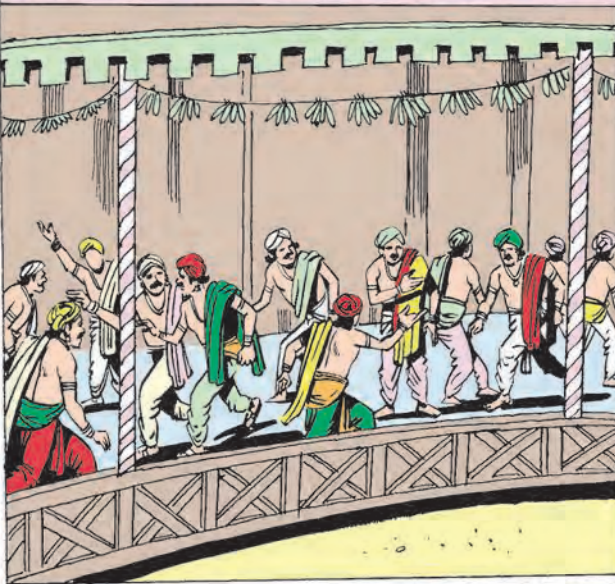
"BESIDE KARNA WERE DURYODHANA AND HIS BROTHERS..."



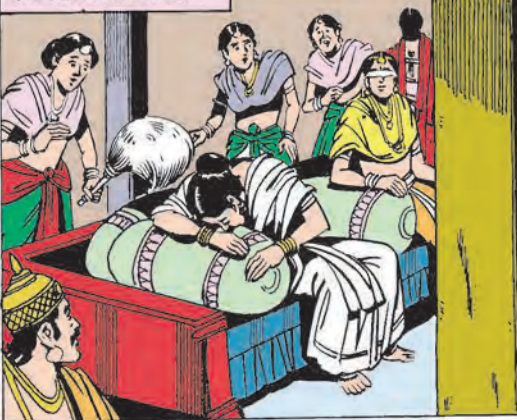
"...WHILE DRONA, KRIPA AND BHEESHMA WERE WITH ARJUNA."



"THE ENTIRE ASSEMBLY, INCLUDING THE WOMEN, WAS DIVIDED."



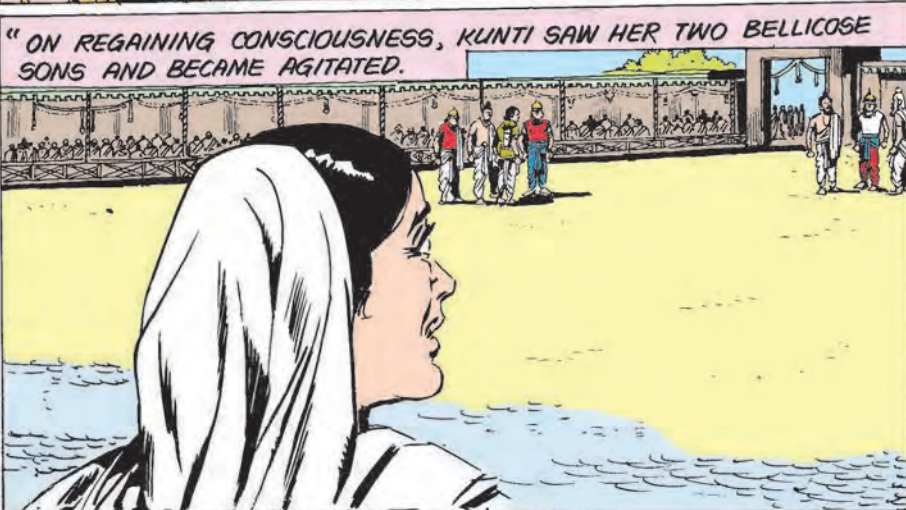
"KUNTI, AWARE OF THE FACTS, FELL UNCONSCIOUS."



"AND VIDURA, WITH THE HELP OF HER MAIDS, REVIVED KUNTI BY SPRINKLING AROMATIC WATER ON HER."



"ON REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS, KUNTI SAW HER TWO BELLICOSE SONS AND BECAME AGITATED."

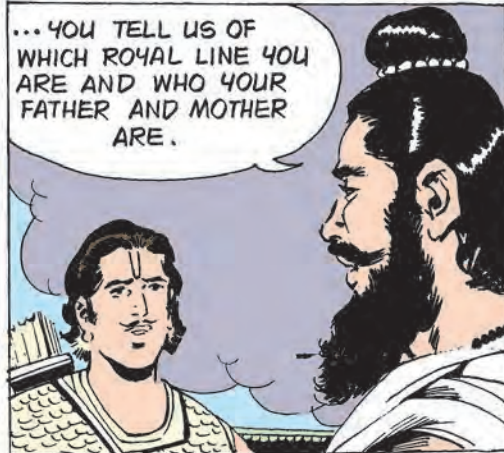


"THEN KRIPA, WHO KNEW WELL THE RULES OF DUELS, SURVEYED THE CONTENDING WARRIORS READY WITH BOW AND ARROWS AND SAID TO KARNA:

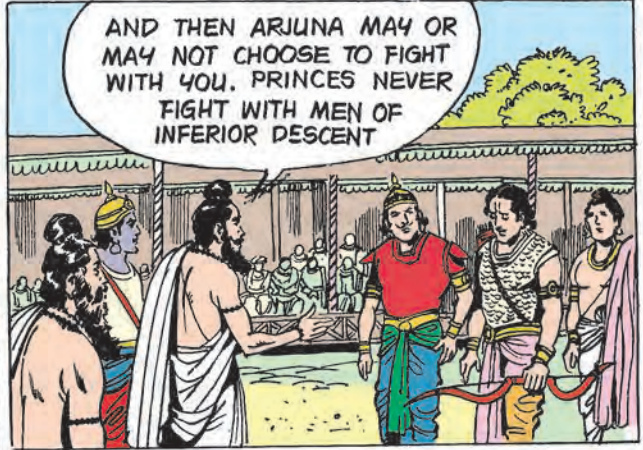
THIS PANDAVA HERE IS THE THIRD SON OF KUNTI AND IS OF THE KURU RACE. HE WILL ENGAGE YOU IN A DUEL. BUT...



... YOU TELL US OF WHICH ROYAL LINE YOU ARE AND WHO YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER ARE.

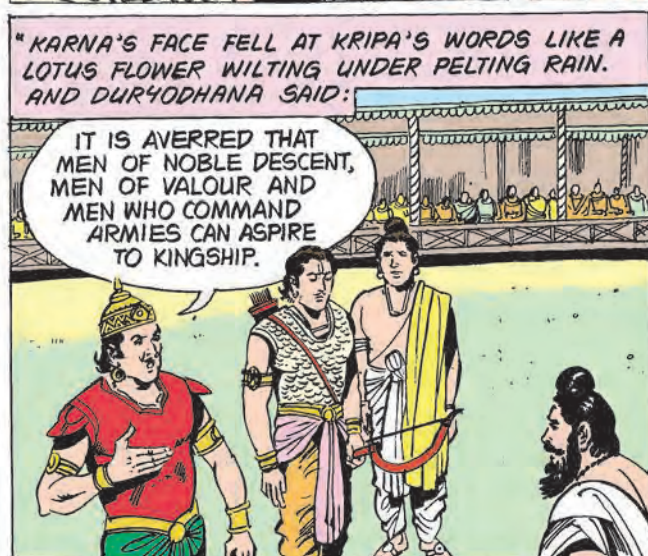


AND THEN ARJUNA MAY OR MAY NOT CHOOSE TO FIGHT WITH YOU. PRINCES NEVER FIGHT WITH MEN OF INFERIOR DESCENT

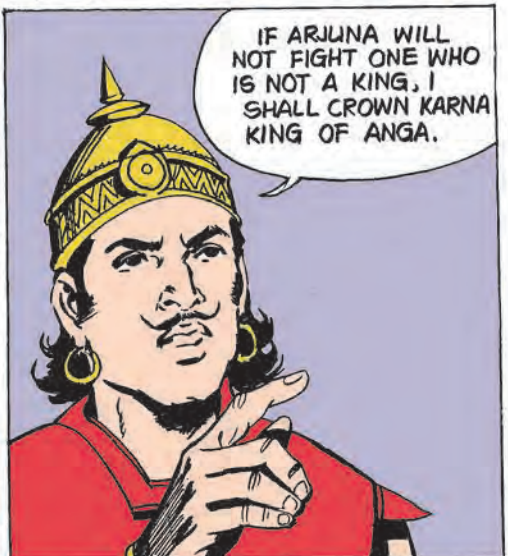


"KARNA'S FACE FELL AT KRIPA'S WORDS LIKE A LOTUS FLOWER WILTING UNDER PELTING RAIN. AND DURYODHANA SAID:

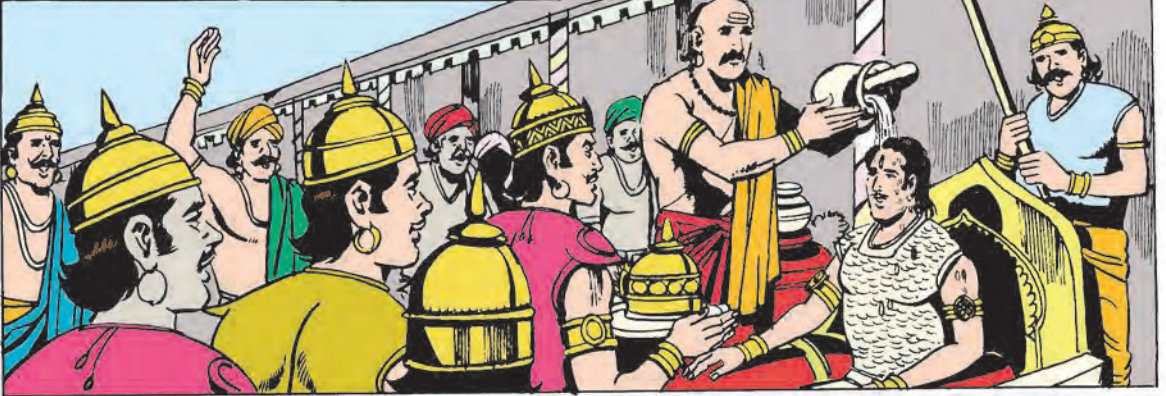
IT IS AVERRED THAT MEN OF NOBLE DESCENT, MEN OF VALOUR AND MEN WHO COMMAND ARMIES CAN ASPIRE TO KINGSHIP.



IF ARJUNA WILL NOT FIGHT ONE WHO IS NOT A KING, I SHALL CROWN KARNA KING OF ANGAS.



"AT THAT VERY MOMENT, KARNA WAS INSTALLED ON A SEAT OF GOLD AND CROWNED KING OF ANGA, WITH CEREMONIAL GRAINS AND FLOWERS, BY MEN WHO KNEW THE MANTRAS. AND THE ROYAL UMBRELLA WAS RAISED OVER HIS HEAD WITH A BURST OF CHEERS OF APPROVAL."



"THEN KARNA SAID TO DURYODHANA:



"AND DURYODHANA SAID TO HIM:



"AND KARNA SAID:



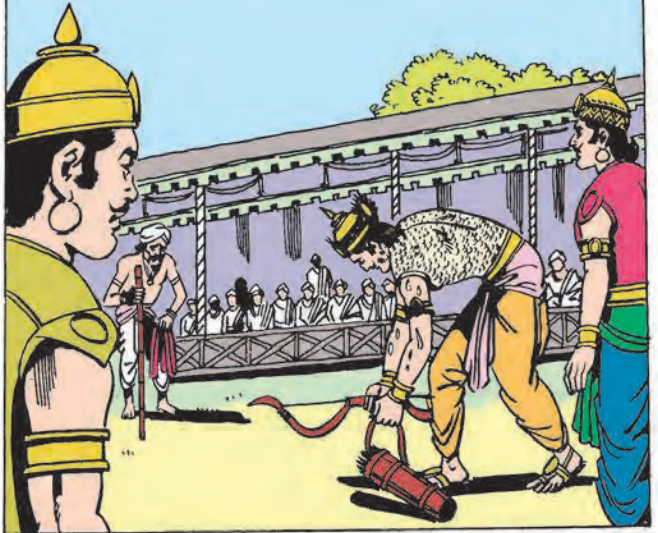
"AND HAPPY AT THE TURN OF EVENTS THE TWO EMBRACED EACH OTHER."



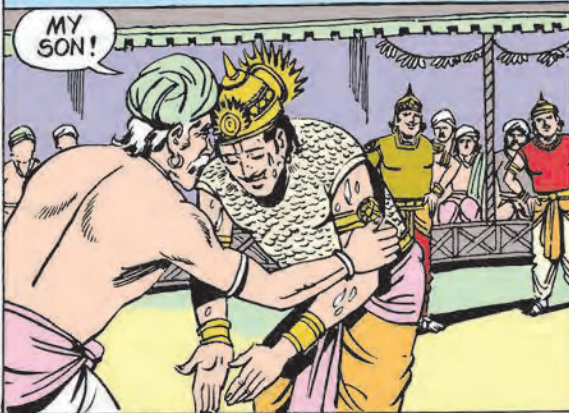
"AND THEN CAME ADHIRATHA ON THE SCENE, WITH HIS CLOTHES ALL ASKEW, SUPPORTING HIS TREMBLING, PERSPIRING SELF ON A STAFF.



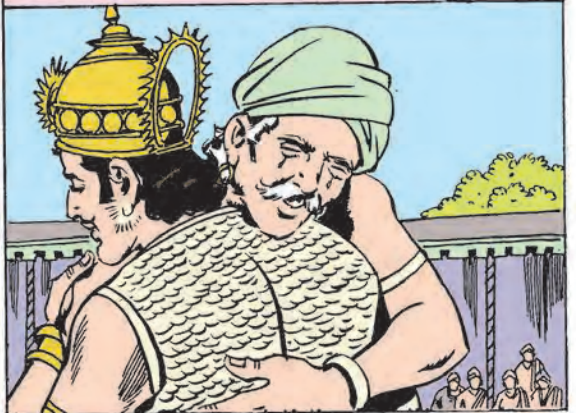
"AS SOON AS KARNA SAW HIM HE LEFT HIS WEAPONS AND:..



...IN FILIAL PIETY, BOWED HIS HEAD WHICH WAS STILL WET FROM ANOINTING.



"THE CHARIOTEER HELD HIS FOSTER-SON CLOSE AND SHED TEARS OF JOY.



"BHEEMA, WATCHING THE EVENTS, TOOK KARNA TO BE THE CHARIOTEER'S OFFSPRING AND SAID IN WORDS OF SLIGHT:



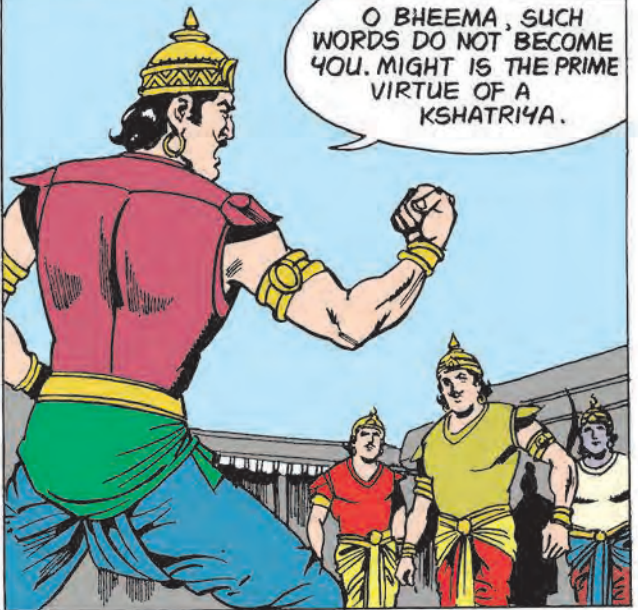
NEITHER ARE YOU WORTHY OF REIGNING OVER ANGAs, EVEN AS A CUR IS NOT WORTHY OF PARTAKING THE SACRAMENT BY THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.



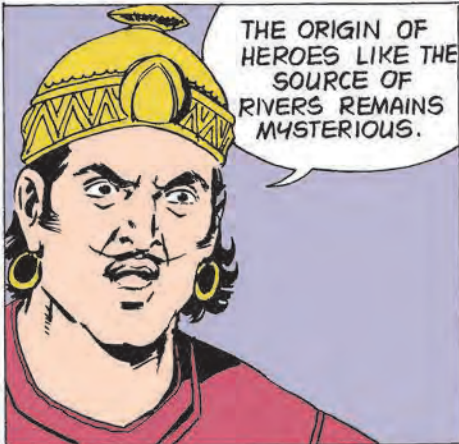
"WHEN KARNA HEARD THIS, HE DREW A DEEP BREATH AND WITH LIPS QUIVERING EVER SO LITTLE, SHOT A GLANCE AT THE SUN IN THE SKY.



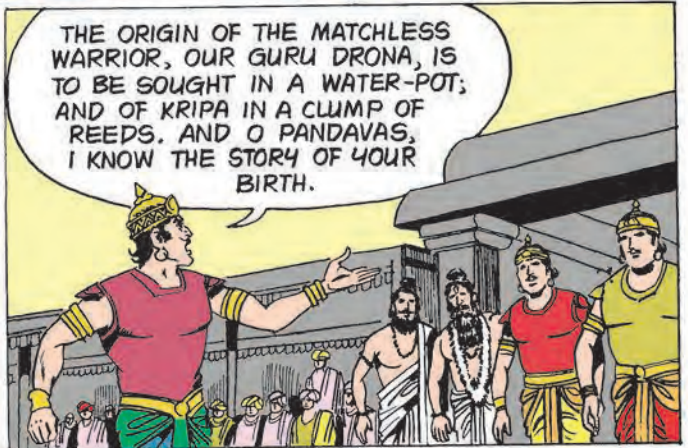
"DURYODHANA THEN ROSE UP IN RAGE, LIKE AN ELEPHANT IN RUT, AND ROARED:



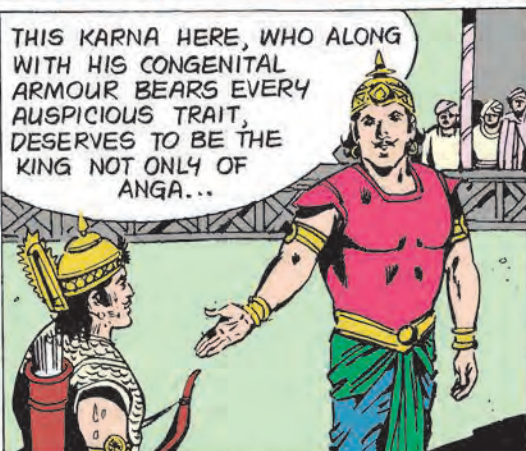
THE ORIGIN OF HEROES LIKE THE SOURCE OF RIVERS REMAINS MYSTERIOUS.



THE ORIGIN OF THE MATCHLESS WARRIOR, OUR GURU DRONA, IS TO BE SOUGHT IN A WATER-POT; AND OF KRIPA IN A CLUMP OF REEDS. AND O PANDAVAS, I KNOW THE STORY OF YOUR BIRTH.

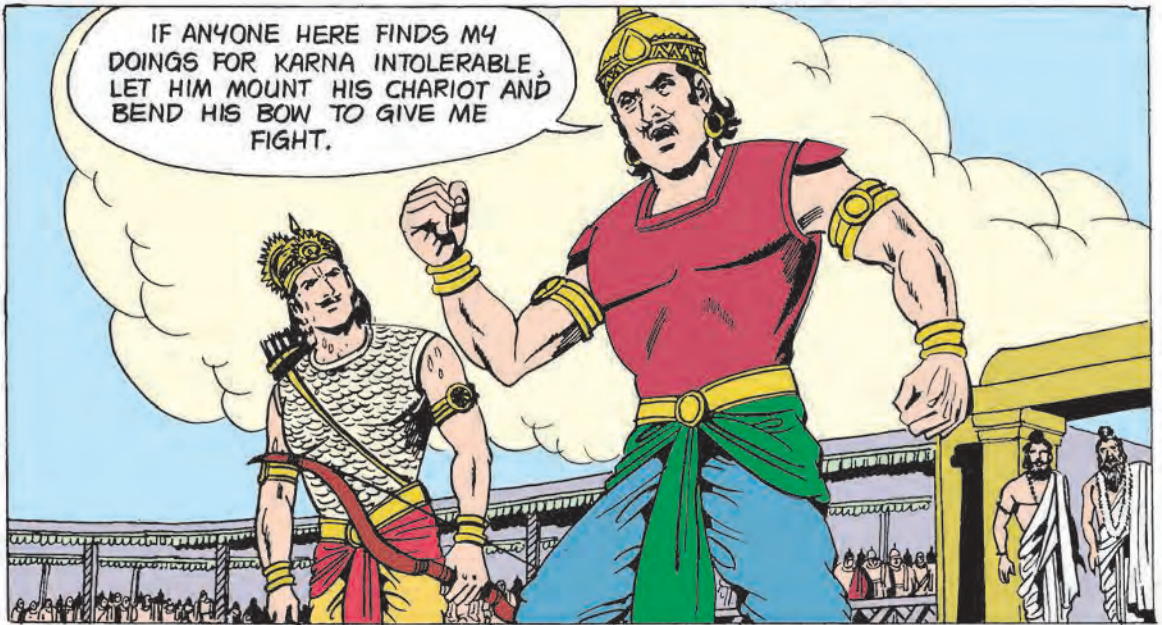


THIS KARNA HERE, WHO ALONG WITH HIS CONGENITAL ARMOUR BEARS EVERY AUSPICIOUS TRAIT, DESERVES TO BE THE KING NOT ONLY OF ANGAS...

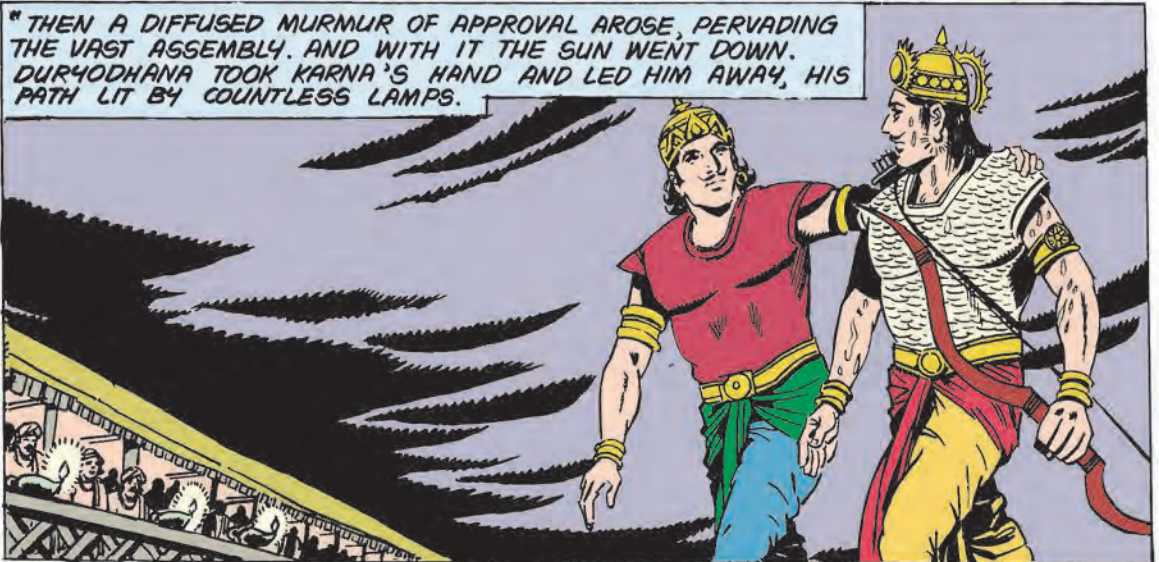


... BUT OF THE WHOLE WORLD.



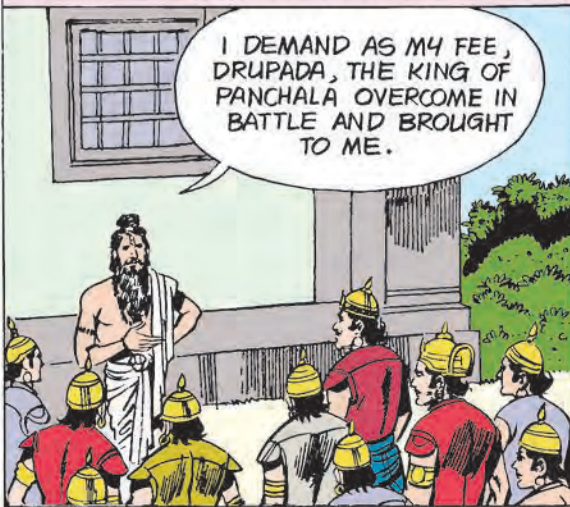


"THEN A DIFFUSED MURMUR OF APPROVAL AROSE, PERVADING THE VAST ASSEMBLY. AND WITH IT THE SUN WENT DOWN. DURYODHANA TOOK KARNA'S HAND AND LED HIM AWAY, HIS PATH LIT BY COUNTLESS LAMPS.



AND, O MONARCH, THE PANDAVAS ALONG WITH DRONA, KRIPA AND BHEESHMA RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES. THE PEOPLE TOO CAME AWAY, SOME CLAIMING VICTORY FOR ARJUNA, SOME FOR KARNA AND SOME FOR DURYODHANA. KUNTI WAS SECRETLY PLEASED AS SHE RECOGNIZED IN THE NEWLY-CROWNED KING OF ANGAS HER SON KARNA. AND YUDHISHTHIRA CAME AWAY WITH THE FIRM BELIEF THAT KARNA WAS THE ARCHER PAR EXCELLENCE. AS FOR DURYODHANA, ARJUNA NO LONGER REMAINED A THREAT TO HIM, BECAUSE HE WAS REASSURED BY KARNA'S FRIENDSHIP.

"PERCEIVING THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAIRAVAS TO BE COMPLETE WARRIORS, DRONA THOUGHT THE TIME HAD COME TO DEMAND THE TEACHER'S DUES. AND, O MONARCH, HE SAID TO THEM ONE DAY:



I DEMAND AS MY FEE, DRUPADA, THE KING OF PANCHALA OVERCOME IN BATTLE AND BROUGHT TO ME.

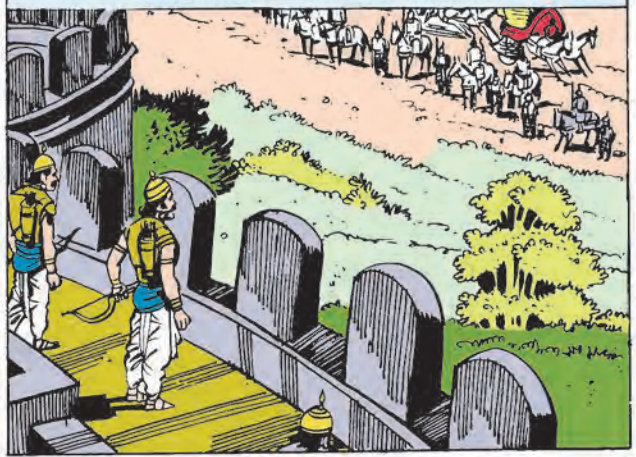
"ACCORDING TO THE DEMAND, THE PUGNACIOUS PRINCES MARCHED OUT ACCOMPANIED BY DRONA.



'THEY FOUGHT THE PANCHALAS IN THEIR WAY...



"... AND SURROUNDED THE CAPITAL OF DRUPADA.



"WHEN ARJUNA SAW DURYODHANA AND HIS BROTHERS AND KARNA AND YUJITSU VYING WITH ONE ANOTHER TO LEAD THE ATTACK, HE SAID TO DRONA:

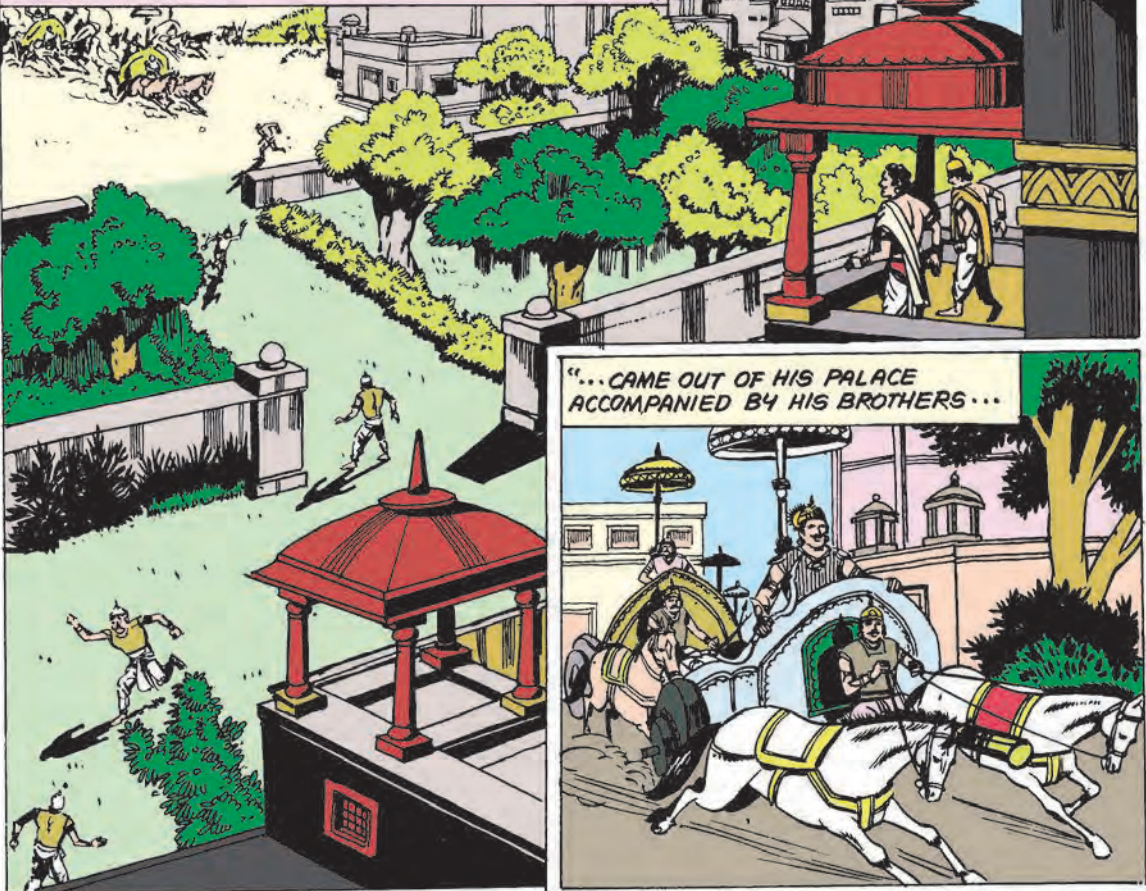
THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEIZE DRUPADA IN BATTLE. WE SHALL MOVE IN WHEN THEY HAVE EXPENDED THEIR ENERGY



"AND ARJUNA AND HIS BROTHERS WAITED OUTSIDE THE CITADEL.



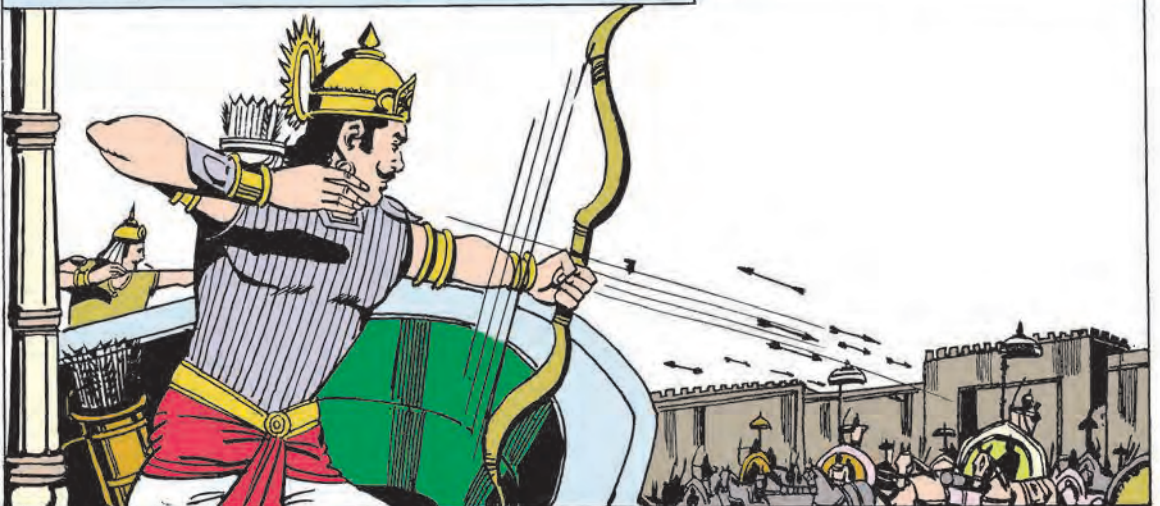
"THE OTHER PRINCES, SPEEDING IN THEIR CHARIOTS AT THE HEELS OF THE CAVALRY, BROKE INTO THE CITY AND THUNDERED UP THE STREETS. MEANWHILE THE KING OF THE PANCHALAS, HEARING THE RUMBLE AND EYEING THE MARCHING ARMY...



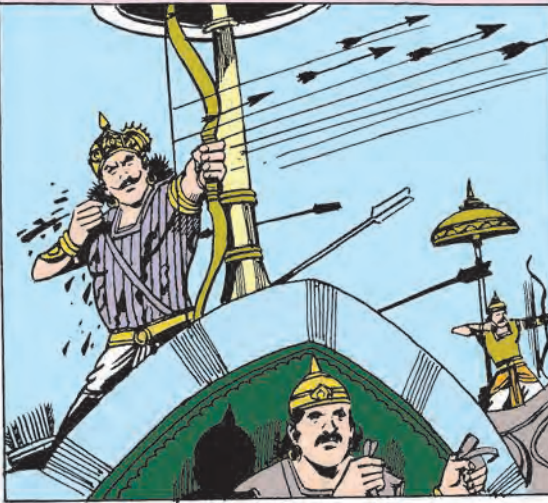
"...CAME OUT OF HIS PALACE ACCOMPANIED BY HIS BROTHERS...



"...AND ASSAILING THE KURUS FROM HIS WHITE CHARIOT, BOMBARDED THEM WITH A VOLLEY OF ARROWS. THEN DURYODHANA AND HIS BROTHER DUHSHASANA, STUNG TO THE QUICK, SHOWERED ARROWS UPON THE ENEMY.



"THE MIGHTY BOWMAN DRUPADA, THOUGH LACERATED, RETALIATED WITH FORCE.

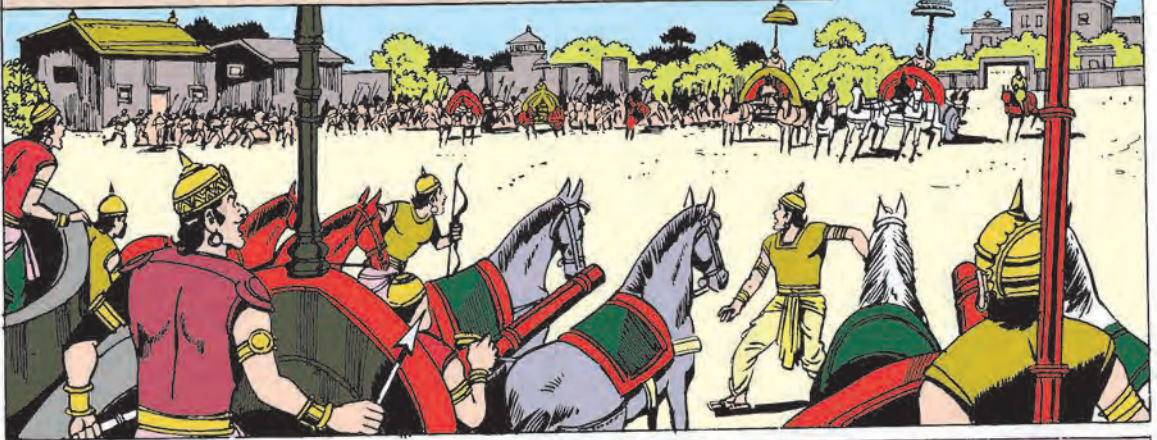


COURSING THROUGH THE BATTLEFIELD, LIKE A WHEEL OF FIRE, DRUPADA SHROUDED DURYODHANA, KARNA AND THE OTHER PRINCES WITH ARROWS.

THOUGH HE WAS FIGHTING SINGLEHANDED, O MONARCH, THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH HE MOVED, STRUCK TERROR AMONG THE KURUS. THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE FIGHTING NOT ONE BUT MANY DRUPADAS. THE SHARP ARROWS OF THAT KING CAME FAST AND FIERCE, TILL THE PANCHALAS IN THEIR HOMES, BEAT THE DRUMS AND BLEW THE CONCHES OF VICTORY.



"ALL THE CITIZENS, YOUNG AND OLD, RUSHED OUT, AND THEY ADDED THEIR LEONINE ROAR TO THE RESONANCE OF THEIR BOW-STRINGS, AS THEY FELL UPON THE KAURAVAS.



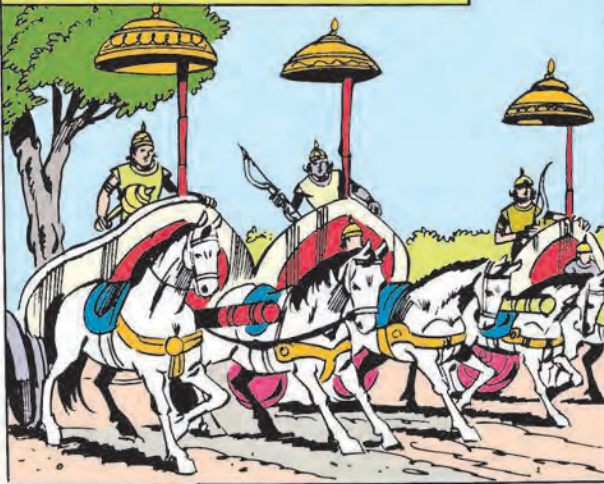
"AND THE BATTLE-SCARRED KAURAVAS CAME WAILING TO THE PANDAVAS.



"WHEN THE PANDAVAS HEARD THE TERRIBLE LAMENT, THEY SALUTED DRONA..."



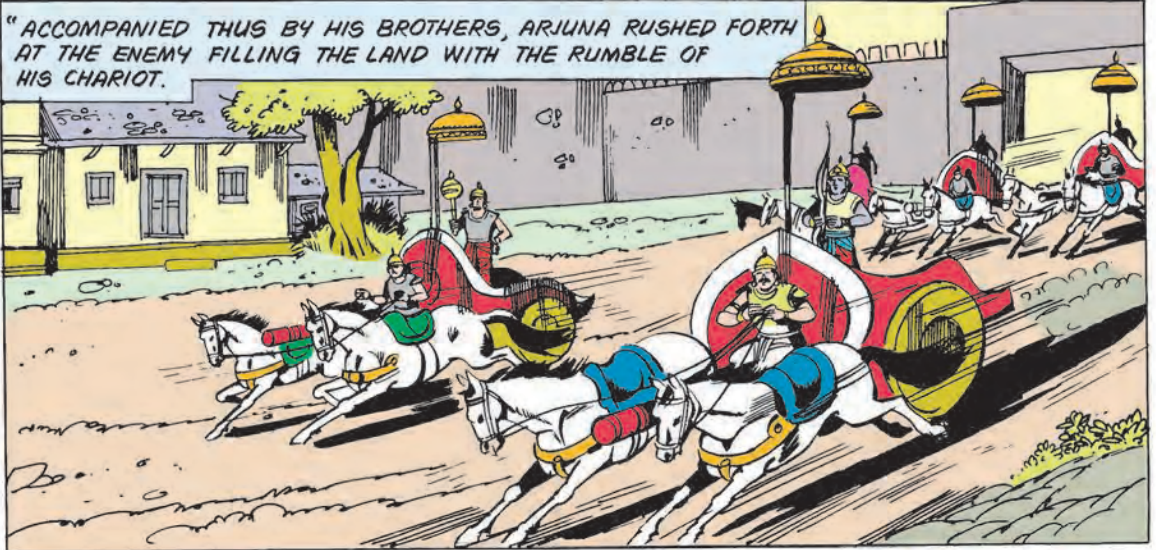
"... AND MOUNTED THEIR CHARIOTS.



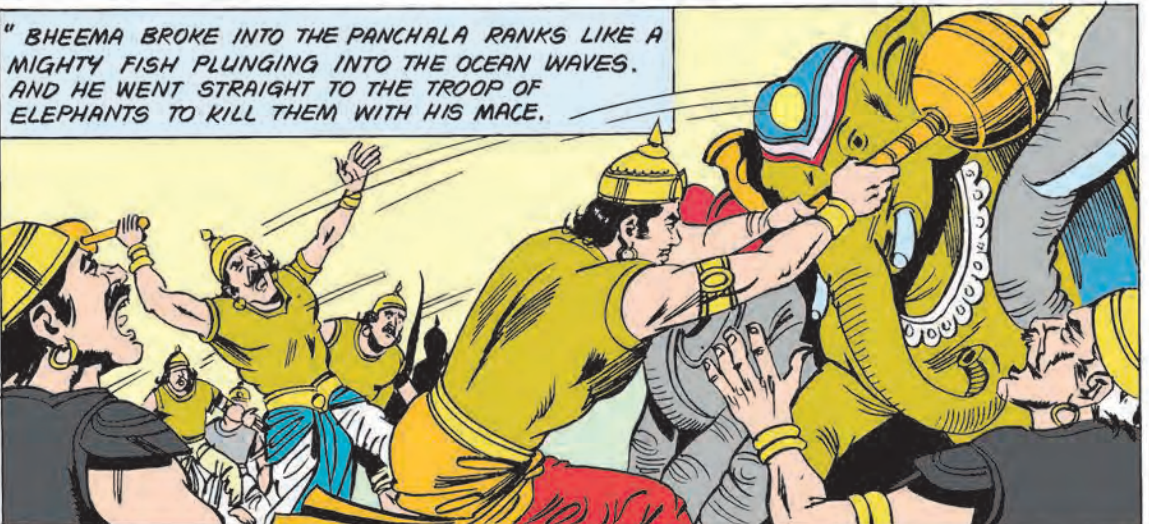
THEN, KEEPING YUDHISHTHIRA OUT OF THE BATTLE, ARJUNA COMMISSIONED NAKULA AND SAHADEVA TO DEFEND HIS CHARIOT WHEELS; WHILE BHEEMA, ALWAYS AT THE FORE-FRONT, STOOD MACE IN HAND.



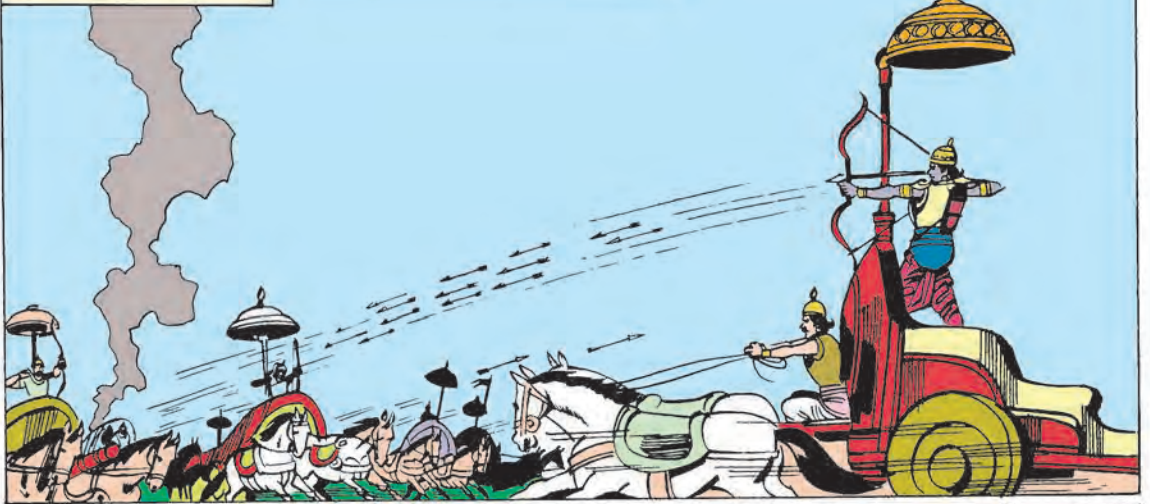
"ACCOMPANIED THUS BY HIS BROTHERS, ARJUNA RUSHED FORTH AT THE ENEMY FILLING THE LAND WITH THE RUMBLE OF HIS CHARIOT.



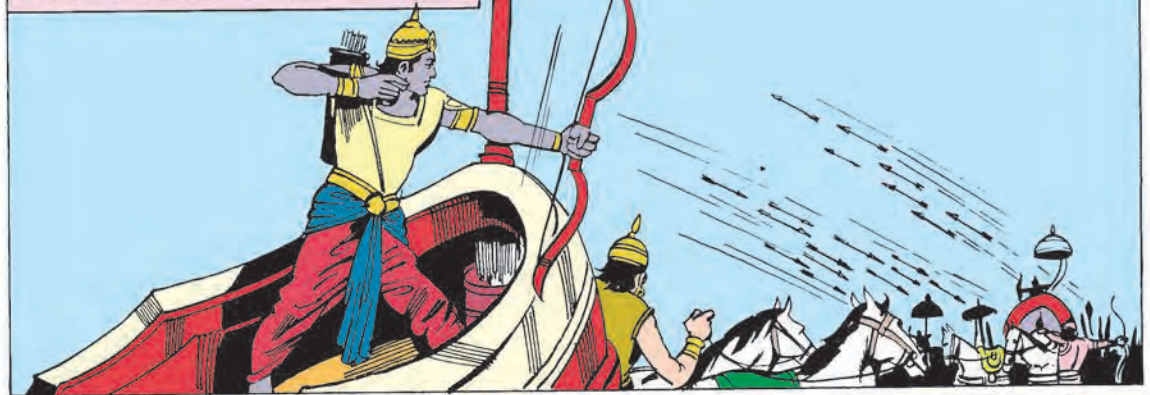
"BHEEMA BROKE INTO THE PANCHALA RANKS LIKE A MIGHTY FISH PLUNGING INTO THE OCEAN WAVES. AND HE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE TROOP OF ELEPHANTS TO KILL THEM WITH HIS MACE.



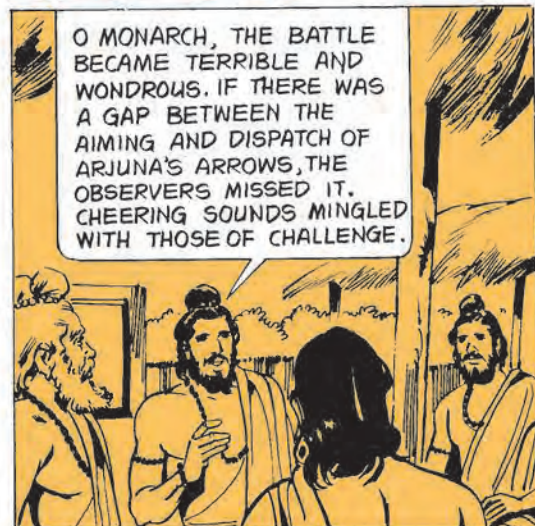
"MEANWHILE ARJUNA, INTENT ON PLEASING HIS GURU, MOVED TOWARDS DRUPADA, SHOOTING ARROWS AT HIM CEASELESSLY.



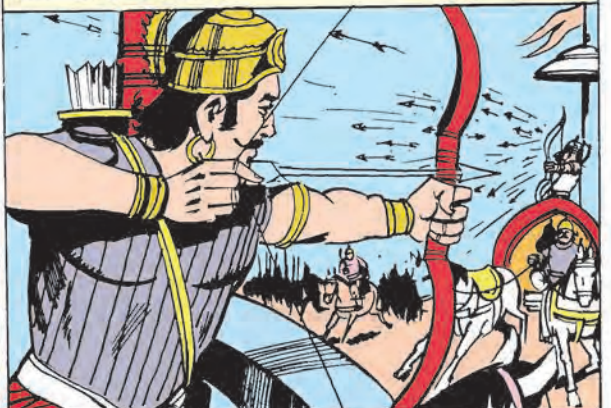
" THEN THE PANCHALAS, ROARING LIKE LIONS, ATTACKED ARJUNA FROM ALL SIDES. ENRAGED BY THE SHOUTS, HE STIFLED THEM WITH HIS NEVER-ENDING ARROWS.



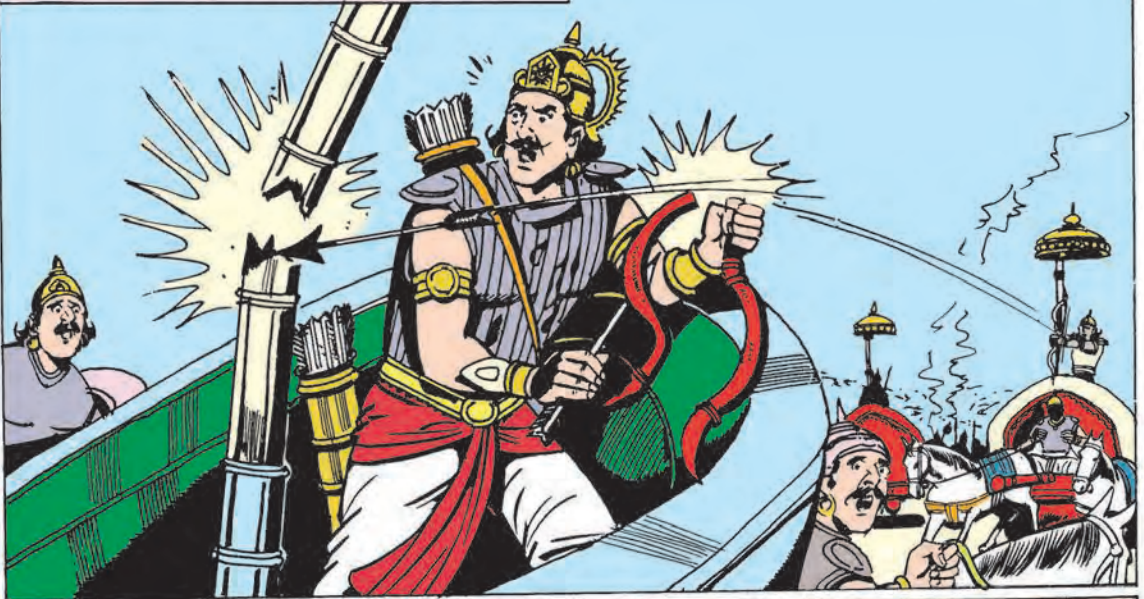
O MONARCH, THE BATTLE BECAME TERRIBLE AND WONDROUS. IF THERE WAS A GAP BETWEEN THE AIMING AND DISPATCH OF ARJUNA'S ARROWS, THE OBSERVERS MISSED IT. CHEERING SOUNDS MINGLED WITH THOSE OF CHALLENGE.



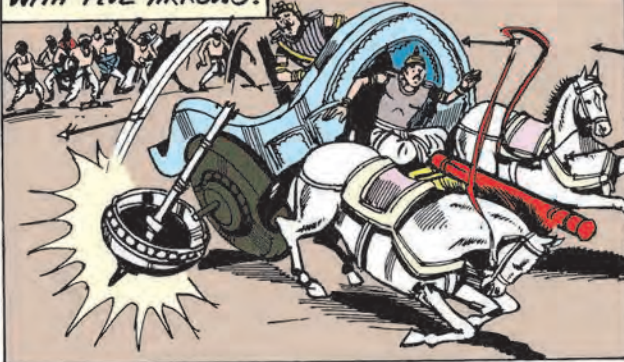
" THEN THE KING OF PANCHALA RACED TOWARDS ARJUNA, LIKE SHAMBARA, THE ASURA DID TOWARDS INDRA IN DAYS OF YORE. EVEN AS DRUPADA COVERED ARJUNA WITH ARROWS...



"... THE PANDAVA PRINCE CUT THE KING'S BOW, AND HIS FLAGSTAFF INTO TWO..."



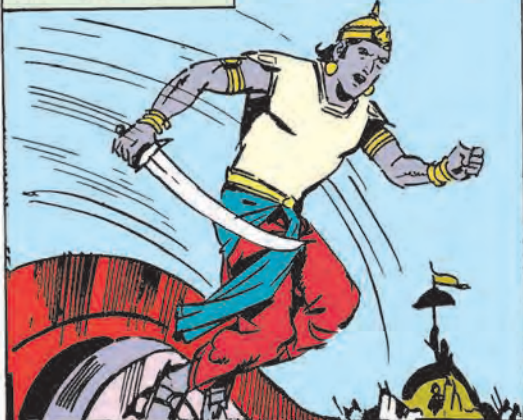
"... AND FELLED HIS HORSES AND CHARIOTEER WITH FIVE ARROWS."



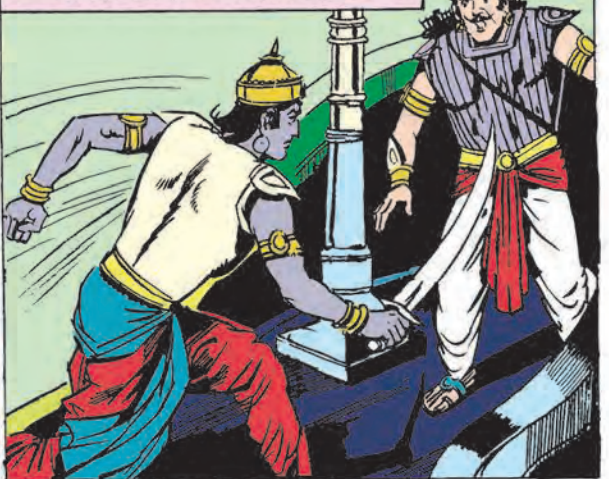
"AS THE KING STOOD GROPPING FOR ANOTHER BOW, ARJUNA ABANDONED HIS OWN..."



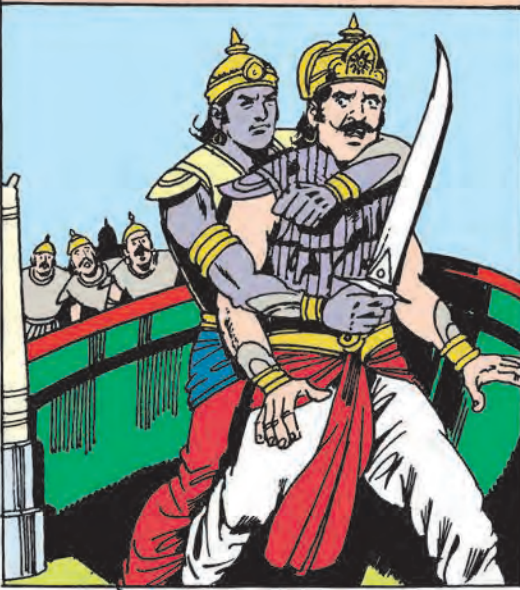
"... UNGHEATHED HIS SWORD, AND ROARING LIKE A LION, LEAPT OUT OF HIS CHARIOT..."



"... ONTO THAT OF HIS ENEMY..."



... AND CAPTURED HIM. SEEING THIS...



... THE PANCHALA ARMY FLED. ARJUNA WHO HAD PROVED HIS MIGHT TO ALL, LET OUT A ROAR OF TRIUMPH...



... AND MADE HIS RETURN.



THE PRINCES SEEING ARJUNA RETURNING THUS, BEGAN TO SLAY DRUPADA'S MEN.



THEN ARJUNA SAID:

DRUPADA, THE VALIANT KING, IS RELATED TO THE KURU HEROES. THEREFORE, BHEEMA, DO NOT KILL HIS SOLDIERS. LET US GO AND PAY OUR GURU DAKSHINA.



O MONARCH, WHEN ARJUNA RESTRAINED HIM THUS, BHEEMA TURNED BACK THOUGH HIS YEARNING FOR BATTLE REMAINED UNFULFILLED.

